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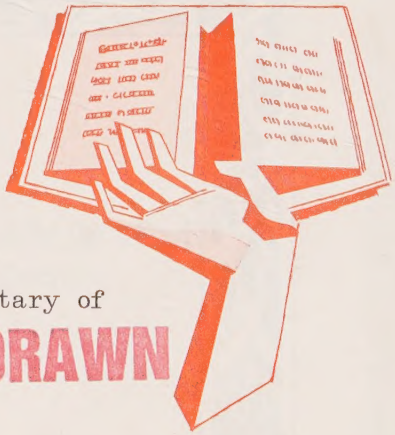

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The great commentary of
Cornelius à Lapide

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THE GREAT COMMENTARY

OF

CORNELIUS À LAPIDE.

TRANSLATED AND EDITED

BY

THOMAS W. MOSSMAN, D.D.,

RECTOR OF TORRINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE,

Assisted by Various Scholars.

כִּי־קִנְאַת בֵּיתְךָ אֲכָלַתְנִי

S. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

Third Edition.

JOHN HODGES,

14 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON.

1903.

INTRODUCTION.

THE *Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to S. Luke*, that is, the Holy Evangelical History of the words and acts of Jesus, as described by S. Luke. The Arabic says, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, the Gospel of the Excellent Father, Luke the Evangelist, the laying open of the glorious Gospel." The Syraic, "In the name of the Lord and our God, we Jeschua Mescicho, sign the Gospel, the holy message of Luke the Evangelist, which he spoke and proclaimed in Greek, in Alexandria." From this diversity, it is clear that the above title or inscription was prefixed to the Gospel, not by S. Luke himself, but by the Church which, in like manner, inscribed one Gospel "According to S. Matthew," one "According to S. John," and another "According to S. Mark." Nay, as regards the faith of the future, this title would have been added to no purpose by S. Luke himself, unless the Church had declared his Gospel to be genuine and not supposititious, and had handed it down as such. This speaks for Tradition against the heretics, for why is the Gospel, bearing the name of S. Luke, to be received as truly his, whilst that with the title of "Matthew and Thomas" is not to be considered theirs? Or again, why is the Gospel of S. Luke more canonical than that of Apelles or Basilides? No other reason can be given but the proof, declaration, and tradition of the Church. For we accept it, not because it is written in the sacred books, but because it has been so handed down by the Church. For instance, we believe this to be the Gospel of S. Luke and canonical, not because he wrote it, but because the Church so delivers and teaches. For although its own authority pertains to this Gospel, as to the others, yet this

authority would not be plain to us, but for the declaration of the Church. The same is, *a pari*, to be said of the *sense* of Scripture. For the true sense of Scripture is not what appears to you or me, for this would be uncertain and doubtful, for Calvin affirms one sense to be the true one, Luther another, and others another, but that which is taught and received by the Church, whose office it is to deliver as well what is the true Scripture as what is its true meaning. For Holy Scripture consists not in the bark (cortice) of letters or words, but in their genuine meaning. So the Fourth Session of the Council of Trent, and the Fathers everywhere, especially Tertullian (B. iv. cap. 5 against Marcion). See what I have said on S. Matthew i. 1.

Observe: I. S. Matthew was the first in order of the Evangelists. He wrote in Hebrew to the Jews in Judæa. S. Mark was the second. He wrote in Greek and Latin to the Romans in Italy; then S. Luke wrote to the Greeks in Greek; and S. John last of all, also in Greek; but S. Luke wrote the more elegantly, because he was the more perfect master of Greek. Hear S. Jerome (Ep. 84 to Paulinus): "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the quadriga of the Lord, and true Cherubim (which is interpreted, the 'multitude of knowledge'), through their whole body they are 'full of eyes,' sparks shine from them, lightnings flash forth, their feet are 'straight,' and point upwards, their backs are winged, and they fly hither and thither. They hold themselves mutually one with another, and are 'enfolded' with one another, and are rolled together, like a wheel, and they go wherever the influence of the Holy Spirit directs them." See Ezekiel i. 9, x. 12; Revelation iv. 6–8.

Moreover, among the faces or forms of the four Cherubim, the third, that of the ox, is ascribed to S. Luke, as well because he begins from the priesthood of Zachariah, whose chief sacrifice was an ox, as because he underwent the labours of an ox in the Gospel, and bore about continually in his own body the mortification of the Cross for the honour of the name of Christ, as the Church sings of him. See what has been said on Revelation iv. 7, and Ezekiel i. 10.

II. S. Luke wrote his Gospel against certain gaping, ignorant, perhaps even false Evangelists, who had written, in Syria or Greece,

an imperfect, it may be a lying Gospel, as S. Luke himself signifies in the beginning of his work. So say Origen, S. Ambrose, Theophylact, and S. Epiphanius (*Her.* l. 1), who, however, when he adds that S. Luke wrote against Cerinthus and Meritus, does not seem to speak correctly. For these two, and especially Basilides, were later than S. Luke, as is clear from Eusebius (Hist. B. iii. ch. 32). Theophylact and Bede think, with more truth, that S. Luke wrote against the Apocryphal Gospels of others, such as pass under the names of "Thomas, Matthew, and the Twelve Apostles."

III. S. Luke was not one of the seventy-two disciples of Christ, as Euthymius and S. Gregory in his preface on Job, chap. i. think, on the authority of Origen; for S. Luke never saw Christ in the flesh, but he wrote what he had heard of Him from the Apostles, as he says himself, i. 2. Hence the Fathers call S. Luke "the disciple of the Apostles," and S. Paul mentions him by name, as his "fellow-labourer." So S. Jerome, on the 65th chapter of Isaiah, and preface to S. Matthew; where he says, "The third" (evangelist) is Luke the physician, by nation a Syrian, of Antioch, whose praise is in the Gospel (2 Cor. viii. 18 and 22), who himself was a disciple of S. Paul. He wrote his Gospel in the neighbourhood of Achaia and Bœotia, relating some things from the beginning, as he says himself, and describing rather what he heard than what he saw. St. Irenæus says the same, i. 20; Theodoret, on the Lives of the holy Fathers; Baronius, and others. Tertullian, also (Book iv. against Marcion, chap. 5), thinks this Gospel not so much S. Luke's as S. Paul's, because S. Luke wrote from the dictation of S. Paul, as S. Mark from that of S. Peter. For he says, "what S. Mark wrote may be ascribed to S. Peter, whose interpreter S. Mark was. And so the Gospel of S. Luke is generally given to S. Paul, for the productions of the disciples began to be ascribed to the masters."

S. Jerome also states that "S. Luke, in the Gospel and Acts, performed the duties of a physician of souls, as he had before done of bodies" (Ep. 103 to Paulinus); and again (in that to Philom), "Luke the physician left in his Gospel, and the book of the Acts of the Apostles to the Churches, how the Apostles from fishers

of fish became fishers of men, and from the bodies of men became concerned with their souls, whose Gospel, as often as it is read in the churches, fails not of its medicine."

IV. Baronius thinks that S. Luke wrote in the companionship of S. Paul, anno 58, because S. Jerome says that he wrote his Gospel that year in Achaia and Bœotia, where S. Paul was. Others, however, are of opinion that S. Luke wrote earlier, as we must certainly admit, if we agree with S. Jerome (*Lib. de Script. Eccl. in Luc.*), Tertullian (Book iv. against Marcion, c. 5), Primasius, Anselm, and others, on 2 Cor. viii. 18, that by "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel" S. Paul meant S. Luke—as S. Ignatius, his fellow-citizen and contemporary, plainly asserts in his letter to the Ephesians: "As Luke bears witness, whose praise is in the Gospel." For the Second Epistle of S. Paul to the Corinthians was written in the year 58, so that if the praise of S. Luke was in the Gospel at that time, we must necessarily say that it (the Gospel) had been published previously. Hence Euthymius, and Theophylact in his Preface to S. Luke, say that he wrote fifteen years after the ascension of Christ, that is, about the year 49. But S. Luke had not then joined S. Paul, for he came to him in the Troad in the year 51, as Baronius rightly concludes from Acts xvi. 10. It appears, therefore, that S. Luke wrote subsequently to the year 51, but some years before 58, for, as S. Paul says, in that year he was well known and celebrated.

V. S. Luke, after he had joined S. Paul, passed some time away from him, having been sent by him to other places (as I have shown on Acts xvi. 10), until S. Paul, when he had passed through other countries, came to Greece, thence to Syria, and so to Rome. Acts xx. 3, 4. For S. Paul, with other companions of his voyage, who are named in that verse, took S. Luke also, as S. Luke himself states, verses 5, 15. From that time S. Luke became the "diligent" companion of S. Paul, even up to the time of S. Paul's first imprisonment, which was in the second year of Nero, when S. Luke finished the Acts of the Apostles, and, especially, those of S. Paul. Then, as S. Epiphanius says, S. Luke left S. Paul in

prison, and went into Dalmatia, Gaul, Italy, and Macedonia, and preached the gospel everywhere till he came to Patara, a city of Achaia, where, in his eighty-fourth year, he was crowned with a glorious martyrdom in the year of Christ 61, the fifth of Nero, and the seventeenth of the session of S. Peter at Rome. So Baronius says, from S. Gregory Nazianzen, Paulinus, Gaudentius, Glyca, Nicephorus and others.

Lastly, who S. Luke was—of what rank and ability, I have described at length in the Book of Acts, where I have said that he appears to be the same as Lucius, whom S. Paul calls his kinsman, Rom xvi. 21. But he seems different to Lucius of Cyrene, mentioned in Acts xiii. 3. For S. Luke was of Antioch, not Cyrene. Again, the Roman Martyrology, on April 22, says that Lucius was among the first disciples of Christ, which cannot be said of S. Luke.

VI. The reason of S. Luke's having written a Gospel after SS. Matthew and Mark, was twofold. 1. To confute the false gospels that were then being published in Syria and Greece, as I have said before. 2. To write at length those words and acts of Christ which had been passed over by the other Evangelists, and especially His Infancy and Childhood, the Annunciation of His forerunner John the Baptist, His Conception, Nativity, Presentation in the Temple, Presence among the Doctors, the Conversion of St. Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, the thief on the cross, the appearance to the two Disciples at Emmaus, the Parables of the Pharisee and Publican, the Good Samaritan, the Strayed Sheep, the Lost Piece of Money, the Prodigal Son, Lazarus and the Rich Glutton, and others; which show the mercy and pity of Christ to sinners and the miserable. See S. Irenæus, iii. 4, who recounts each. S. Luke also relates, more fully than the others, the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension.

Lastly, S. Peter Damianus, in his Sermon on S. Matthew, says, "S. Luke observes the proper method and order when he describes the priestly stock of the Lord and His Person, and, with this object and intent, proceeds to describe at length every part of the Temple

and the priests, to the end of the history. For, as the Mediator between God and man in His human nature, He pleased to be King and Priest in one, that through His kingly power He might rule, and, by His office of Priest, atone for us. These two "Personæ" of Christ are especially praised by the Fathers, for to Him principally and by singular prerogative God gave the seat of His Father David, that there might be no end of His Kingdom, and that He might be a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek.

S. Anselm again, on Colos. iv., gives two reasons why S. Luke, more than the others, should speak of the mercy of Christ. 1. S. Luke was a physician of bodies; then, when he turned to Christ, he was made a physician of souls. Hence he speaks, more than the other Evangelists, of the mercies of the Redeemer, by which the weaknesses of sins are driven away. 2. In Christ, he describes the person of a Priest, making intercession for the sins of the whole world.

Lastly, our own John de la Haye, in his *Oparat. Evangel.* chap. 68, recounts the twenty-five privileges granted to S. Luke, where, among other things, from S. Jerome, Bede, and Ado, he says that S. Luke never committed mortal sin, but passed a strict life of continual mortification; that he also preserved his virginity to the end, and was therefore beloved by the Blessed Virgin especially and before all others.

S. Ambrose and Titus of Bostra have commented especially on S. Luke. And Tertullian, in his whole work against Marcion (who had declared the Gospel of S. Luke, though adulterated, to be his own), treats of and explains many passages of this Gospel. Cardinal Toletus, also, wrote at length, and with exactness, on the first twelve chapters.

THE

HOLY GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST,

ACCORDING TO S. LUKE.

—o—

CHAPTER I.

1 *The preface of Luke to his whole gospel.* 5 *The conception of John the Baptist,* 26 *and of Christ.* 39 *The prophecy of Elisabeth, and of Mary, concerning Christ.* 57 *The nativity and circumcision of John.* 67 *The prophecy of Zacharias, both of Christ,* 76 *and of John.*

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word;

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

5 THERE was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come

upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of the salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy *is* his name.

50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy;

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

57 Now Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not *so;* but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa.

66 And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68 Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Ver. 1.—*Forasmuch as many.* Maldonatus is of opinion that the Evangelists Matthew and Mark are intended; but these were not *many*, but only *two*. S. Luke rather seems here to allude to the Apocryphal Gospels, which were circulated under the names of Matthias, Thomas, and other apostles.

Most surely believed. Completæ sunt, Vulgate. πεπληροφορημένων, Greek. This word signifies—1. *fully accomplished;* 2. *surely ascertained:* as it is rendered by S. Ambrose, Theophylact, Euthymius.

Ver. 2.—*Which from the beginning were eye-witnesses*, &c. *Ipsi viderunt*, Vulgate. αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου, Greek: that is who were eye-witnesses (*oculares spectatores*) and ministers of the word: which we may understand—1. of Christ, for He is the Word of the Eternal Father; the meaning then will be, "As the

Apostles who saw Christ Himself and ministered to Him delivered them to us." 2. Of ordinary preaching; the meaning then will be, "As they delivered them who saw the deeds of Christ, and were sent by Him to preach the Gospel."

Ver. 3.—*Having had perfect understanding.* παρηκολουθηκότι, Greek: that is "carefully investigating," and therefore "having understood."

In order. καθεξῆς, Greek; that is—1. successively, 2. distinctly, in order so as to relate, first the conception of Christ, then His nativity, afterwards His life, and lastly His death and resurrection.

Theophilus. Theophilus was a noble and chief man of Antioch, who was converted by S. Peter and dedicated his house as a church in which S. Peter held assemblies of Christians, and placed his chair as primate, as S. Clement relates Recog. lib. 10, cap. ult. Baronius conjectures that S. Luke, who was a physician and painter of Antioch, wrote to Theophilus as a citizen and as his own intimate friend; Theophylact adds that S. Luke was a catechumen of Theophilus, for S. Peter by himself was not able to instruct the multitude who came together to be taught the faith of Christ, and therefore he made use of the labours of many others for instructing the faithful. He is called *most excellent*, which was a title given to governors and magistrates; he seems therefore to have been a senator or governor of Antioch.

Ver. 4.—*That thou mayest know the certainty. Veritatem, truth,* Vulgate. ἀσφάλειαν, Greek, *certainty, stability.*

Ver. 5.—*There was in the days of Herod.* S. Luke begins by mentioning the name of Herod to point out the time when John the Baptist and Christ were born; and also to show that the sceptre had now departed from Judah, and had passed over to an alien, and therefore that the time for the advent of the Messiah was at hand according to the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. This Herod was the first of that name, surnamed the Great, the father and grandfather of the others. He was a native of Ascalon, an Idumæan by nation, in character a tyrant. By the favour of Cæsar he held the kingdom of Judæa; but Christ thrust him and his

descendants out of this kingdom, and claimed for Himself the kingdom over Israel which by right was due to Him, though it must be understood as a spiritual kingdom.

Hence he is rightly called Herod; for Herod in Syriac is the same as "a fiery dragon." According to Pagninus, Herod signifies in Hebrew "the conception of threshing," for הרה is to conceive, and דוש to thresh, because he slew the infants in Bethlehem.

Zacharias. He was a priest and also a prophet, as will appear from verses 64 and 67. Whence his name is enrolled among the saints in the Roman Martyrology for the 5th of November: where Baronius, following Origen, Nyssen, Cyril, and Peter Alexander, is of opinion that this Zacharias was the martyr who was slain by Herod between the Temple and the Altar, and therefore that he was the one whom Christ mentions, S. Matt. xxiii. 35. His head is preserved and shown at Rome in the Lateran Basilica, from which there is a tradition that formerly blood trickled during several days. I have seen it there and venerated it.

Of the course of Abia. Of that class of the priests of which in the time of David Abia was the head. For David, seeing that the priests, the sons of Aaron, had increased to a large number, so that all could not at once minister in the Temple, distributed them into twenty-four classes, so that each class might minister in the Temple during one week in succession. And that there might be no strife among them as to which course should be the first, second, or third, &c., these families cast lots, and obtained the first place or second, &c., according as the lot came out. In this drawing of lots the eighth place fell to Abia and his descendants. All this is clear from 1 Chron. xxiv. Josephus (*Antiq.* vii. 11) says of David, "He found twenty-four families of priests, and he appointed that each family should minister before God during eight days, from Sabbath to Sabbath," in order to avoid confusion and strife among the priests.

And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron. Priests could marry a wife from another tribe because they had no inheritance in the land of Israel, which by the marriage of the wife (if she through the failure of male offspring were the heir of her father) passed over

to her husband's tribe, and so a confusion was caused of inheritances and tribes which was forbidden by the law. But Zacharias having more regard to religion, married a wife not only of the daughters of Levi, but of Aaron. Wherefore S. Ambrose says, "Not only from his parents but from his ancestors the illustrious descent of S. John is derived, a descent not exalted by secular power, but venerable from its sanctity. She was called Elizabeth from the wife of the first high priest Aaron, Exod. vi. 23. This Elizabeth was holy, and a prophetess: whence her memory is observed in the Roman Martyrology on the 5th of November. From her S. Elizabeth, daughter of Andrew, king of the Hungarians, surnamed the mother of the poor, and her niece S. Elizabeth, the queen of Portugal took, their name together with her sanctity.

And her name was Elizabeth. Zacharias in Hebrew is the same as "God remembered;" and Elizabeth, "the oath of God," or "the sceptre and dominion," or "rest," or "fulness of God." So that the meaning is that God, mindful of His oath, united these two in marriage, that He might raise up the sceptre of the house of David, and bestow rest and plenty and abundance on His own.

Ver. 6.—*Righteous* (*just*) *before God.* Many appear just before men, but few before God, because men look upon the countenance, but God on the heart and conscience. S. Francis says truly, "Each man is what he is before God, and no more."

Walking in all the commandments, &c. *Commandments, i.e.* the moral precepts of the Decalogue. *Ordinances, i.e.* the ceremonial precepts.

God gave to the Hebrews by Moses precepts of three kinds. 1. Moral precepts, which are contained in the two tables of the law. 2. Judgments which relate to justice and human polity, and chiefly concern princes. 3. Statutes, decrees ceremonial, pertaining to the sacrifices and rites observed in the worship of God. These are called here and elsewhere *Justifications*, Vulgate: first, because those who observe them do what is most right and just, that is to say, perform the service and worship which is most rightfully due to God. Secondly, because by the observance of these men for-

merly under the old law were justified legally; for those who fulfilled them were considered just persons by the Synagogue, and that not only before man but before God, if they performed those things from the true love of God. *For the doers of the law are justified*, Rom. ii. 13.

Blameless. *Sine querelâ*, Vulgate; ἄμεμπτοι, Greek. Mark here that the faithful can, yea, ought to observe all the commandments of God; wherefore it is possible to keep them, and not impossible, as Calvin blasphemously asserts, who in this place makes a wonderful exhibition of himself, and all but says that Luke the Evangelist is a liar.

Further, *blameless* may be interpreted as "without mortal sin," for no just man in this life can avoid all venial sins.

Ver. 7.—*Well stricken in years.* He says this to show that John was born of them, not in the way of nature, but by the gift of God and by a miracle, like other eminent saints, as Isaac, Joseph, Samuel. S. Augustine (*Serm.* iii. *on John the Baptist*) says Elizabeth was barren in body but fruitful in virtues; her child-bearing was not taken away from her, but it was delayed, until the time of fleshly desire had passed away. . . . In short, when all that causes blame as regards the body was quenched, and they became altogether blameless, all that speaks of barrenness is gone; old age springs into new life, faith conceives, chastity brings forth, one greater than man, one equal to the angels is born, the trumpet of heaven, the herald of Christ, the mystery of the Father, the messenger of the Son, the standard-bearer of the heavenly King, the pardon of sinners, the correction of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and, so to say, the uniting bond of the Law and Grace.

Ver. 9.—*According to the custom of the priesthood his lot was.* That is, according to Bede, in his own course, which was the eighth in order, according to the lot which had originally fallen to the family of Abia. But mention of this course has been made in verse 8; and therefore the lot spoken of in verse 9 is different from the course, and more particularly limits the course. The meaning, therefore, is that when Zacharias, in the order of his course,

was ministering in the temple, among the various offices of the priests the office of burning incense fell to him by lot. For because there were many priests of the course of Abia, it was appointed to them by lot what office each of them should perform in the Temple. For there were four principal offices (see Exodus xxx.) —1. To sacrifice. 2. To light the lamps on the seven-branched candlestick. 3. On the sabbath-day to place twelve new loaves on the table of shewbread. 4. To burn incense on the altar of incense. This fourth office, therefore, had fallen by lot to Zacharias, while the three others had fallen to other priests of the same class of Abia. This is clear from the Greek ἔλαχε τοῦ θυμιᾶσαι, "he had obtained by lot to burn incense."

Some, as S. Ambrose, Bede, Theophylact, and S. Augustine think that Zacharias was the high priest, because he burnt incense on the altar of incense, for they think that this was in the Holy of holies, which no one except the high priest might enter. But I have shown (Exod. xl. 24), that this altar was not in the Holy of holies, but in the Holy place, which the common priests used to enter daily. The expression here used, *it was his lot* (*sorte exiit.* Vulgate) confirms this; for the high priest was superior to all lots, and, whenever he chose, used to minister in the temple. Besides, at this time, not Zacharias but Joazar was the high priest, as Josephus tells us (*Antiq.* xvii. 8).

Morally, we may learn that angels appear while we are engaged in sacred things, and that God either Himself or by an angel speaks with the soul when we are engaged in prayer or sacrifice, as the angel appeared to Zacharias when he was burning incense.

Ver. 10.—*And the whole multitude were praying without.* That is in the court outside the Holy place or Temple, which the priests alone might enter. There were two courts; the inner one, of the priests, containing the altar of burnt-offering; and the outer one, of the people, who from it beheld the sacrifices offered by the priests: but the altar of incense which was in the Holy place they could not see.

At the time of incense. That is to say, when the priests burnt the

incense; for according to the religious usage of all nations incense was burnt in the worship of God.

Ver. 11.—*There appeared unto him an angel* (Gabriel, as is clear from v. 19), *standing on the right side of the altar.* 1. Because he had come to announce good tidings. Euthymius. 2. Because he brought down the token of Divine mercy, for the Lord is on my right hand, therefore I shall not be moved. S. Ambrose. We may learn from this that angels stand by altars, priests and sacrifices, and co-operate with them in the worship and adoration of God. Of this there are many instances in the lives of the saints, some of which I have mentioned, Exod. xxix. 38; Lev. ix. 24.

Ver. 12.—*Zacharias was troubled.* Both because of the unusual sight, and because of the majesty in which he appeared, which human weakness could scarcely endure to behold: "for man is not strong enough to bear such a strange and unusual sight without alarm." Titus. So Daniel, when the same angel appeared to him, says, "There remained no strength in me, and my comeliness was turned into corruption." Hence it is the sign of a good angel if at first he causes fear and afterwards joy; but of a bad angel if he makes a man sorrowful after causing joy; whence S. Antony says, "If joy has succeeded to fear we may know that the vision is from God; for the peace of the soul is a sign of the Divine presence; but if the fear remains unshaken it is an enemy who is seen."

Ver. 13.—*Thy prayer is heard.* Not his prayer for offspring, S. Augustine says, of which he now so despaired that he did not believe the promise of the angel (verse 20), but thy prayer as a priest for the sins of the people and for the coming of the Messiah. But God, who goes beyond the merits and the prayers of suppliants, promised him a son who should be the prophet and forerunner. So Bede, Theophylact, S. Augustine, S. Chrysostom..

Some, however, are of opinion that this prayer of Zacharias was for offspring, only that it had been offered not at this time, but formerly when he was younger.

Thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his

name John. Because *John*, according to Maldonatus, is the same in Hebrew as *beloved:* or, according to Pagninus, *the gift or mercy of the Lord.* This is not, however, the precise meaning; for then he would have rather been called Hananiah than John. Properly, therefore, the name John signifies, *God hath had mercy.* And He did this first when he heard the prayer of Zacharias; and secondly by appointing John as the forerunner of the Messiah, and soon after by sending the Messiah Himself; for it was by Christ, and not by Moses and the law, that grace came. So the son of Anna was called Samuel, that is *asked and obtained from God* by the tears of his mother for the salvation of the whole people, 1 Sam. i. 20. Thirdly, God also showed mercy on John himself (Bede, Jansen, Maldonatus), by filling him with His manifold grace; by which He made him a Doctor in Israel, a Prophet, an Anchorite, a Martyr, a Virgin, and the Forerunner of Christ. John therefore was, as it were, the Son of Charities and Graces, in whom all the Graces of God seem to have blended together.

Mark here the threefold mystery of the three names: for Elizabeth, that is, the oath of God who promiseth, and Zacharias, God's remembrance of His promise, are the parents of John, that is, the mercy and grace of God.

Ver. 14.—*And thou shalt have joy and gladness.* Thy son shall be to thee and to many others the cause of the greatest joy and exultation.

Ver. 15.—*Great in the sight of the Lord:* to Whom alone it belongs to determine what is great, what is ordinary, and what is small. Many, says S. Theophylact, are called great in the sight of men, who, being little, esteem little things as great; but John was great in the sight of the Lord, who, being great, weigheth things that are great.

He was great on account—1. of his sanctification in his mother's womb; 2. the depth of his humility; 3. his extraordinary charity; 4. his exemplary penitence; 5. his seraphic zeal; 6. his whole life, which was as much human as angelic; 7. the sublimity of his prophesying; 8. his solitary life; 9. his office of forerunner of

Christ; 10. his most noble martyrdom. See the twenty eight privileges ascribed to John, which Baradius enumerates here.

And he shall not drink wine nor strong drink. Strong drink (*Sicera*) is everything that intoxicates. To abstain from wine and strong drink was peculiar to Nazarites; and from this place it appears that John was one during the whole of his life.

And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. This was when on the entrance of the Blessed Virgin he leapt in his mother's womb, and, as far as he could, fulfilled his office of forerunner. John, therefore, was born again of the Spirit before he was born of his mother.

Was John then truly cleansed from original sin in the womb and justified? S. Augustine (*Ep.* 57) and S. Jerome (*in Jerem.* i.) maintain that he was not; for they say that John and Jeremiah are both said to have been sanctified in the womb not really, but according to the predestination of God; for they were ordained to future sanctity, so that the same is said here concerning John that the Apostle says of himself, Gal. i., "Who separated me from my mother's womb." The reason that S. Augustine gives is, that to be born again presupposes being born; but John when in the womb was not yet born; therefore he could not have been born again in reality, but only according to the predestination of God.

But the common opinion of the Fathers is contrary to this (S. Athanasius, Cyprian, Ambrose, Gregory, and others) which I approve of—First, because the angel here most clearly promises "he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb." Secondly, because at the salutation of the Blessed Virgin he believed in Christ when in the womb. For at that time it was when he was visited and saluted by the Blessed Virgin in the sixth month from his conception that this wonderful sanctification took place. To the argument of S. Augustine I answer, that a man in order that he may be born again may be considered as born when he has been conceived in the womb; for then as he is born in original sin so also he can by grace be born again and

even baptized, as is clear from the practice of the Church in certain cases.

Ver. 17.—*He shall go before Him.* John went before Christ. 1. In his birth, for he was born six months before Christ. 2. In his baptism, for he baptized before Christ did; yea, he even baptized Christ. 3. In preaching of repentance that he might prepare the way for Christ. 4. By pointing out Jesus as the Messiah and Lamb of God who should take away the sin of the world. 5. By suffering martyrdom before Christ. 6. In descending to the fathers in limbus, and announcing to them that Christ would soon come and set them free.

In the spirit and power of Elias. As Elias did excel and in the end of the world will excel in a spirit steadfast and powerful for contending against Antichrist, so that he will convert Jews and others from him to Christ; so in the same powerful spirit John will excel, and by his preaching and holy example move the hardened Jews to repentance, and so prepare them for the baptism of Christ.

The spirit of power in John was like that in Elias; 1. In the austerity of his life. 2. They both lived in solitude. And 3, in poverty and contempt of the world. 4. In zeal, and in fervour of preaching, by which both of them converted many Israelites to repentance, and Elias will again do so in the last days, according to the saying (Ecclesiasticus xlviii. 1), "Elias stood up like fire, and his word burned like a lamp." In the same way Christ says of John, "He was a burning and a shining light," S. John v. 35. 5. In fortitude and suffering: for as Elias contended against the priests of Baal, and their patrons Ahab and Jezebel, and again in the last days will contend against Antichrist and his followers and will suffer many things from them and at last be slain as a martyr; so John contended against Herod and Herodias, and being beheaded by them obtained the crown of martyrdom.

John here is rather compared to Elias in his future coming than in his past; because, as Elias will precede the second coming of Christ with great spirit and power, so likewise John with the same spirit and power will precede the first coming of Christ. S. Ambrose

says that he will go before Him "in the spirit and power of Elias, because Elias had great power and grace, so that he turned back the hearts of the people to faith, power of abstinence, and patience and the spirit of prophecy. Elias was in the wilderness; so also was John. . . . The one sought not the favour of Ahab; the other despised that of Herod. The one divided Jordan; the other brought men to the laver of salvation. The one was the forerunner of our Lord's first advent, the other of His second," &c.

To turn the hearts of the fathers, &c. John did this when he urged them by word and example to imitate the faith and piety of their fathers; for thus the fathers acknowledged their children as the worshippers of the true God. These words are taken from Malachi, who speaks literally of Elias, typically of John.

And the disobedient, &c. Greek ἀπειθεῖς, Vulgate, *incredulos*. That is, he will turn them to the faith and wisdom which the just had and have concerning Christ, which consists in the fear and love of God and of heavenly things, and not perishable, according to the teaching of Christ (Maldonatus). Or, John will cause the unbelieving Jews to consider the signs of the coming of the Messiah given by God to the fathers, and from them to know and believe that Christ has already come, and that this Jesus, whom John pointed out as such, is He.

A people prepared, &c. *Perfectam*, Vulgate; κατασκευάσμενον, Greek; that is well and perfectly prepared and made ready for receiving the teaching and faith of Christ, and the perfection of grace, justice, and the Christian life brought by Christ from heaven.

Ver. 18.—*And Zacharias said to the angel*, &c. That is, give a sign or a miracle for a proof to me that the great things which you are promising will surely come to pass. This hesitation on the part of Zacharias seems to have proceeded from want of deliberation and reflection, and therefore was only a venial sin, for which he was punished by being deprived of the power of speech. Far otherwise did Abraham, who, when the angel promised that Isaac should be born to him from Sarah who was barren, immediately believed; "for he was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully per-

suaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform," Rom. iv. 20, 21.

Ver. 19.—*I am Gabriel, who stand.* That is, "I am wont to stand, ready to minister to the will of God in all things; I am not indeed now standing before Him in heaven, for I have been sent thence to thee to the earth." Although on the earth angels may also stand before God, and behold His Face; for God is everywhere (S. Matt. xviii. 10). Hence we may gather that the same angels stand before God and minister to Him, although S. Dionysius the Areopagite and S. Gregory deny this; for Gabriel stands before God and ministers to Him, and is sent to Zacharias.

Moreover, the words "stand before" signify that Gabriel is one of the seven angels who are the chiefs of the heavenly court, as are also Michael and Raphael (Tobit xii. 15). Of these seven angels I have spoken at length on Apocal. i. 4. Wherefore although some, as Toletus, are of opinion that Gabriel belongs to the last order but one, which is that of archangels, because he is elsewhere called an archangel, yet he more truly seems to be one of the first order which is that of seraphim, and therefore is called by many an archangel; and there are not wanting some who think that he is the first of all among the seraphim. Cardinal Vignerius (*in Decachordo Christ. Cord.* i. 2) proves this by eight reasons which I have enumerated on Dan. ix. 21. All of which are reduced to this one. For the highest work it is fitting that the highest angel should be sent; but the Incarnation of the Word is the highest work of God, therefore Gabriel, who was sent to announce that, is the highest angel. But this reason is not conclusive, as I have there shown. For the common opinion of theologians is that Michael is the highest of all the angels, and the Antagonist of Lucifer. Apocal. xii. 7.

Gabriel in Hebrew means *God hath strengthened me*, or *the strength of God*, or *God is my strength.* He is therefore fitly sent to announce the birth of John and to bestow upon him the spirit of power.

Ver. 20.—*And behold thou shalt be dumb,* &c. Theophylact and

S. Ambrose translated, "thou shalt be deaf," and so make a distinction from what follows, "and not able to speak." For although the Greek word σιωπῶν properly signifies one who is dumb, yet one who is deaf may be understood by the same word; for dumbness and deafness are naturally connected, for those who are born dumb are also deaf, and *vice versa*. Wherefore the Greeks alike call a dumb and a deaf man κῶφον. Zacharias therefore was made deaf as well as dumb. Whence in verse 22 he is called κωφός. Hence at verse 62 his friends and neighbours do not speak to Zacharias as being deaf, but signify to him by signs that he should write the name by which he wished his son to be called. "He rightly," says Theophylact, "suffered these two things, the loss of hearing and the loss of speech; for because he had been disobedient, he incurs the punishment of deafness; and because he had objected, of silence."

Until the day that these things, &c. Zacharias not believing the promises of the angel, had asked for a sign to be given him of the birth of John; the angel therefore complying gives him a sign which at the same time shall be a punishment.

Ver. 23.—*The days of his ministration*, &c. λειτουργίας, Greek. That is of his sacred ministration in the Temple. His house was situated in the mountains of Judæa, where his wife Elizabeth was.

Ver. 24.—*After those days his wife conceived.* Elizabeth conceived about the 24th of September, on which day many Christian Churches celebrate the conception of John. So that the incense was offered by Zacharias, and his vision and the promise of the angel concerning the birth of John seem to have taken place a little earlier, during the feast of Tabernacles. By this it was signified that John would be born, who was to be the herald of Christ, and through Him the cause of common joy to the whole world; for he would teach men that they were strangers upon the earth, and that they dwelt in it as in a temporary tabernacle, and that they were enrolled by God as citizens of heaven, where they would obtain an eternal and most blessed home. For the Feast of Tabernacles was a sign of all these things, during which the Hebrews with branches of palm trees used to celebrate dances joyfully,

because they had been brought in by God into the promised land, after they had been dwelling in tents during forty years in the wilderness. Hence it seems that John was conceived about the time of the autumnal equinox, and born about the time of the summer solstice, after which the days decrease in length; while, on the other hand, Christ was conceived at the vernal equinox, and born at the winter solstice, after which the days increase; because, as John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

She hid herself five months, &c. This hiding was a sign of shame and modesty; for she blushed at her child-bearing on account of her age, says S. Ambrose; but in the sixth month, when she heard and saw that her kinswoman the Blessed Virgin had conceived without losing her virginity (which was a much more strange and wonderful thing), then she laid aside her shame and went forth openly.

My reproach. Among the Jews in that age, barrenness was a great reproach, and was considered as a sign of the malediction of God.

Ver. 26.—*In the sixth month.* That is the sixth month from the conception of John. Christ was therefore six months younger than John the Baptist. We ought to understand that this sixth month was not beginning but ending, or rather ended; for from the 24th of September, when John was conceived, to the 25th of March, when Christ was conceived, there are six whole months. The Annunciation therefore by Gabriel, and consequently the Incarnation of the Word, took place on the 25th of March; on which day likewise, Christ, after completing the thirty-fourth year of His life, was crucified. Many are of opinion that the world was created on the same day; so that it was created by God on the same day on which it was afterwards recreated and restored by Christ in His Incarnation and Cross. Whence it is that from this day of March, the English, the Venetians, the Pisans, and several other nations reckon the years after Christ.

The Angel Gabriel. S. Jerome remarks on Daniel viii. that there are three angels, Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel, who are especially mentioned in Scripture; of whom Michael presides over the

prayers and offerings of the faithful, and is therefore called Michael (that is, who is like God); for it is the prerogative of God alone to hear the prayers of penitents: while Raphael presides over the healing of men's bodies, and he therefore restored sight to Tobias when he was blind; whence he is called Raphael (that is the Healer or the Healing of God); and thirdly Gabriel (or the strength of God) presides over the conflicts and wars of the faithful (as is clear from Dan. xii. &c.) Wherefore he is sent to announce the birth of Christ, who was to carry on a most severe war against Lucifer, and the rest of the demons and impious men. Again Gabriel in Hebrew means *man of God;* the meaning of which is that God will be incarnate, and will be a child as to nature and age; but yet He will also be a man, because from the first instant of His conception His soul will be full of all knowledge, grace, and strength, according to the saying of Jer. xxxi. 22, *a woman shall compass a man.* Again, Toletus, following Basil, Dionysius, and others, is of opinion that Michael was one of the principalities, which S. Dionysius places as the first order of the third hierarchy of angels, but that Gabriel was of the order of archangels; but it is more probable that Michael was of the order of the seraphim, and that Gabriel was next to him.

Nazareth. Whence Christ was called a Nazarene, being, as it were, the country in which he was conceived. The Blessed Virgin therefore dwelt there with Joseph, to whom she was betrothed. The house or chamber in which she conceived Christ was consecrated by S. James and the other Apostles as a church. After three hundred years S. Helen built a temple there. Also S. Paula, S. Louis, and other travellers visited it. After a thousand years it was translated by angels from Nazareth to Dalmatia and thence to Italy, to Loretto, where it even now stands, and is visited by pilgrims from the whole world; so that Erasmus himself thus addresses the Virgin of Loretto, "Hail to thee, O noble offspring of kings, the beauty of priests, the glory of patriarchs, the triumph of the heavenly hosts, the terror of hell, the hope and solace of Christians; thou art next to the Divine nature; do not, we pray thee, be

wanting to us; I prostrate myself at thy feet, preserve my poor soul, I beseech thee."

Ver. 27.—*To a Virgin espoused to a man*, &c. Espoused, not by betrothal only but by matrimony already contracted, although not actually consummated, see Matt. i. 18. S. Gregory Thaumasius (*Serm.* 3 *de Annun.*) says, "Gabriel is sent to prepare a chamber worthy of the most pure Bridegroom; he is sent to contract espousals between the creature and the Creator." Also S. Bernard (*Serm.* 1 *de Assump.*) well says, "There is no place in the world of greater dignity than the temple of the virginal womb in which Mary conceived the Son of God, nor in heaven is there any place of higher dignity than the royal throne on which her Son has exalted Mary." And in *Serm.* 4, "What angelic purity even may we venture to compare with that virginity, which was worthy of becoming the shrine of the Holy Spirit, and the abode of the Son of God."

Mary. In Hebrew *Miriam*, that is, *Mar Yam*, myrrh, or bitterness of the sea; for the Hebrews have a tradition that the sister of Moses was called Miriam, because when she was born the bitter tyranny of Pharaoh in drowning the Hebrew children began. But, by the Divine will, the name was afterwards changed to a different meaning, for after the Red Sea had been crossed and Pharaoh had been drowned, she was called *Mariam* (*Mara Yam*), that is mistress of the sea; for as Moses was the leader of the men, so Miriam was the leader of the women in the passage of the Red Sea. Moreover she was a type, says S. Ambrose, of the Blessed Virgin, who is called Mary, that is the Mistress and Lady of the sea of this world, that she may lead us through it in safety to the promised land, that is heaven. S. Isidore (vii. *Etym. cap.* 10) says, "Mary is by interpretation illuminator or star of the sea; for she brought forth the Light of the world. But in the Syrian language Mary is called Lady, because she brought forth the Lord."

For this reason Mary was full of grace, and a sea of graces; for as all rivers run into the sea, so all graces which angels, patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins possessed, came together in her,

as S. Bonaventura says. S. Bridget also shows in her *Revelations*, i. 9, how delightful the name of Mary is to the angels, and how terrible to demons.

And the angel came in unto her, &c. He glided into the chamber of the Virgin as she was praying in secret for the advent of the Messiah and the salvation of men, either through the window or through the door. For angels, since they are most pure spirits, by means of their subtlety pass through all walls and bodies. Although Andrew, Bishop of Jerusalem, in a sermon on the Annunciation, thinks that the angel secretly opened the door and modestly saluted the Virgin.

Hail, Ave. It is very probable that the angel used the ordinary salutation of the Hebrews, שלום לך, Peace be to thee. Unless the opinion of Serarius is to be preferred, that *ave* is the Hebrew חוה *chave* or *have*, that is, "Live;" so that there is an allusion to the name of Eve, which is in Hebrew חוה *chava*, that is the mother of all living (Gen. iii. 20), so that the meaning will be, Eve was not the mother of life but of death, because by sin she delivered over all her children to death, but thou, O Mary, art truly called Eve, because thou art the mother of life, grace, and glory. Hence in Latin *ave* is *Eva* reversed, because Mary turned the maledictions of Eve into blessings.

Highly favoured. Gratia plena, Vulgate, *full of grace.* Greek, κεχαριτωμένη, which Beza translates *gratis dilecta, freely loved;* for he thinks that the just have no inherent and intrinsic, but only an extrinsic righteousness, which consists in this, that, although they be sinners, God of his own good will holds and reckons them as just; which is heresy.

But κεχαριτωμένη answers to the Hebrew נחנה, *filled with grace* or *made acceptable;* for χαριτοω signifies *I make acceptable, I render beloved or dear, I fill with grace.* For God judges nothing to be acceptable except what is truly in itself acceptable; wherefore when He makes any one just and acceptable to Himself, He bestows upon him the gift of justice and inherent grace. Wherefore κεχαριτωμένη is the same as *full of grace:* as it is rendered in our version and the

Syrian, &c.; also by S. Ambrose and others of the Fathers. This word therefore signifies.—1. That the Blessed Virgin had a gift of grace bestowed upon her by God, and that, in a full measure of excellence beyond other just and holy persons, for this epithet is applied solely to the Blessed Virgin, to the end that she might be made worthy to become in time the Mother of God. 2. That she by means of this gift of grace was wonderfully well-pleasing in the sight of God and of all His angels, and in their eyes altogether lovely and beautiful, so that Christ chose her before all others for His mother.

You will say that Christ was more full of grace than the Blessed Virgin. Others also of the saints are said to have been full of the Holy Spirit, as Stephen.

I answer that they are said to have been full of grace, but in different ways. For, as Maldonatus rightly says, a fountain is full of water, so is a river, so are streams, although there is more water and purer in a fountain than in a river, and in a river than in streams. Christ is full of grace, like a fountain where grace gushes forth and is collected as in a reservoir, and from which it flows forth to all men, as from a head to the members. The mother of Christ is full like a river very near a fountain, which although it has less water than a fountain, yet flows with a full channel. Stephen is full like a stream.

S. Augustine (*Serm* xviii. *de Sanctus*) says, "Mary is filled with grace, and Eve is made clear from guilt; the curse of Eve is changed into the blessing of Mary." Toletus (*annotat.* 67) shows that the Blessed Virgin was full of all grace, both in body and soul. For she was free from concupiscence (*fomite concupiscentiæ*), so that in her the flesh was subject to the reason and the spirit, as was the case with Adam in Paradise through original righteousness. Wherefore he adds that in her, nature conspired with grace and co-operated with it in every respect. See also what I have said concerning her in the Commentary on the Canticles, especially on those words (c. iv. 7), *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.*

S. Jerome (*Serm. de Assump. B. V.*) says, "It is well said that she was full of grace, because on others grace is bestowed partially (*per*

partes), but the fulness of grace in complete treasure was infused into Mary." And again, "The entire fulness of grace, which is in Christ, came upon Mary, although in a different way."

Suarez shows that the grace possessed by the Blessed Virgin in the first instant of her conception was greater than the grace which the highest angel possesses, who by one or two acts has perfected all his merits, and therefore she merited more than thousands of men merit through their whole life. Wherefore the Blessed Virgin in this first instant loved and praised God with such earnestness of intention that she exceeded the love, and consequently also the merit, of the highest angel. But in the second instant of her co-operation and love, by means of the increase of grace which in the first instant she had merited and had in reality received, she doubled the degrees of love and consequently also of merit; and in the third instant, by doubling the same she quadrupled both merit and grace; and so in every instant, by doubling continually the grace she had received, until her death in the seventy-second year of her age, she had increased the degrees of grace and merit to such an extent that she altogether excelled in them all men and angels taken together. Wherefore she by herself alone is more acceptable to God than all the rest; and God loves the Blessed Virgin alone more than the whole Church, that is, more than all men and angels taken together. See also the Revelations of S. Bridget i. 10.

The Lord is with thee. The angel gives the reason why she was full of grace, that is, because the Lord was with her in a singular manner, so that He wrought in her the singular work of the Incarnation of the Word. S. Bernard (*Serm.* 3) says, "What wonder is it that she was full of grace with whom the Lord was? But this rather is to be wondered at, how He who had sent the angel to the Virgin was found by the angel with the Virgin. Was God then swifter than the angel, so that He outstripped him and reached the earth before His swift messenger? Nor is it to be wondered at. For since the king was on His couch, the sweet ointment of the Virgin gave forth its odour, and the smoke of spices went up in the sight of His glory, and she found grace in the eyes of the Lord." And further on he

shows that God is in all creatures by power, in rational beings by knowledge, in the good by love, and therefore He is with them by concord of the will, for it is by means of this that they unite themselves to God. Then he adds, "But since He is in this way with all the saints, yet He was in an especial manner with Mary, between whom and Himself there was such a consent that He joined not only her will, but her flesh to Himself, and of His own and the Virgin's substance made one Christ; who although He is not wholely of God nor wholely of the Virgin, yet He is wholely God's and wholely the Virgin's, and not two sons, but the one son of both." Then he shows that the whole Trinity was with the Blessed Virgin. "Not only is the Lord the Son with thee whom thou art clothing with thy flesh, but also the Lord the Spirit by Whom thou art conceiving, and the Lord the Father who begat Him whom thou art conceiving."

S. Bridget (*Revel.* iii. 29), conversing with the Blessed Virgin, says, "Thou art made like to the Temple of Solomon, in which the true Solomon moves, and He sits who has made peace between God and man. Blessed therefore art thou, O Blessed Virgin, in whom the great God became a little child, the eternal God and invisible Creator became a visible creature." The Blessed Virgin answers, "Why do you compare me with Solomon and his Temple, since I am the mother of Him Who has neither beginning nor end, for the Son of God, Who is my Son, is Priest and King of kings. In short, in my Temple He clothed Himself spiritually with the priestly garments in which He offered sacrifice for the world."

Further S. Thomas (*Quæst.* xxx. *art.* 4) expounds the words *the Lord is with thee* of the Conception and Incarnation of the Word, which was presently to take place, but which had not already taken place; as I shall show at verse 38.

Blessed art thou among women. The same was said of Jael and Judith, but it is said here of the Blessed Virgin in a far more excellent way, for she excelled Jael and Judith, and all virgins and matrons a thousand times in blessings, gifts, and graces.

S. Augustine (*Serm.* 18 *de Sanctis*) says, "Blessed art thou among women, for thou hast brought forth life both for men and women

The mother of our race brought punishment into the world; the Mother of our Lord brought salvation to the world. Eve was the originator of sin, Mary of merit." Peter Chrysologus (*Serm.* 145) says on these words, "She was truly blessed, for she was greater than the heaven, stronger than the earth, wider than the world; she by herself alone contained God, whom the world contains not; she bore Him Who bears the world; she brought forth Him by Whom she had been begotten, she gives nourishment to the Nourisher of all things living."

Among women. That he might signify that whatever is most excellent in the threefold condition of women is found in the Blessed Virgin. For women are either virgins or widows, or living in matrimony. In virgins chastity is praised, but not barrenness; in widows liberty of mind is commended, but not solitude, for it is written (Eccles. iv. 10) "Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath not one to lift him up." In matrimony the education of offspring in what is good is highly esteemed, but not the loss of Virginity. The Blessed Virgin alone among all women possessed virginity without barrenness; liberty of mind without loss of companionship, since she was really espoused to Joseph; and what is a greater thing than these, fruitfulness in offspring without the violation of virgin chastity. And so she appropriated whatever is good in the threefold state of women, and whatever is evil she rejected. Whereupon deservedly the angel proclaims her Blessed above all women.

Ver 29.—*She was troubled.* First, at the unwonted appearance, brightness, and majesty of the angel. Secondly, at his unwonted salutation. S. Jerome (*Epist.* 7) says, "Let a woman imitate Mary, whom Gabriel found alone in her chamber, and therefore, perhaps, she was alarmed at beholding a man whom she was not accustomed to see." Again S. Bernard (*Serm.* iii. *on Missus Est*) says, "She was troubled, but not alarmed; her being troubled was a mark of modesty; her not being alarmed of courage; while her keeping silence and meditating was a mark of prudence."

What manner of salutation. That is, how noble and august, and

exceeding the strength and merits of all men, and therefore even her own. For she, in the greatness of her humility, thought far different, yea, even contrary things of herself. For she thought within herself; I seem to myself to be in need of all grace, how then does the angel call me *full of grace*, I in my poverty live and associate with poor virgins, how then does the angel proclaim to me that *the Lord is with me.* I esteem myself the least and lowest of all women, how then does the angel say to me, *Blessed art thou among women.*

Again, the Blessed Virgin was meditating to what end she was so honourably saluted by the angel; for the salutation of the angel had reference to the mystery of the Incarnation which was to be accomplished in her. But since she knew not of this end, she meditated and wondered why she was so honourably saluted by the angel. However, she made no answer, because, as S. Ambrose says, "she did not return the salutation through modesty, nor did she make any answer;" because modesty and astonishment fully occupied her mind, and restrained her tongue.

Listen again to S. Ambrose, "Know the Virgin by her modesty: or she was afraid; as it follows, *and when she heard she was troubled.* It is the habit of virgins to tremble and to be afraid at the approach of a man, and to be bashful when he addresses her. Learn, O virgin, to avoid lightness in talking. Mary feared even the salutation of an angel.

Ver. 30.—*And the angel said unto her*, &c. The angel removes the fear, and then the rising shame of the Virgin, by the grace, that is, the favour and goodwill which he says she has found in the eyes of God above all women; first, because God chose her from all eternity above all others without merit, and of His free and gratuitous love to be His Mother, of whom he would take flesh: secondly, because as soon as she was conceived and born in time, He so adorned her with every virtue and grace that in His sight she appeared altogether pleasing and worthy to be loved by Him, and exalted above all. Thou hast therefore found favour with God on account of the virtues infused into thee by Him in a most excellent

degree. The first is thy most profound humility: the second was thy angelic virginity. S. Basil, in his homily on the human generation of Christ, says, "Virginity is chosen, as being fit and next to sanctity."

The third virtue was her most ardent charity, by which the Blessed Virgin, being desirous of the redemption of mankind and the Advent of the Messiah, used to pour forth unceasing and fervent prayers for both, and therefore she obtained both, and, further, merited herself to become the mother of the Messiah, not from grace of condignity but of congruity. So S. Bernard (*Hom.* 3 *super Missus Est*), "Thou hast found what thou wast seeking. Thou hast found what no one before thee was able to find. Thou hast found favour with God. What favour? Peace between God and man, the destruction of death, the restoration of life." The Schoolmen everywhere teach that the Blessed Virgin merited to become the Mother of God. See Suarez. And some teach that she merited of congruity not of condignity to become the Mother of God, yet that she did not merit the Incarnation of the Word; for this is antecedent to all merit, and is the cause and origin of it.

Ver. 31.—*Behold, thou shalt conceive.* The angel shows that Mary found favour with God because she is about to conceive and bring forth Jesus, that is, God and man. He alludes to and also quotes the prophecy, Isa. vii. 14.

Hence then is refuted, first, the Manichæan, who says that Christ did not take real flesh of the Virgin, but only the appearance of flesh; for a son who is conceived in the womb and brought forth is a real son, and not one in appearance only: secondly, Valentinus, who teaches that Christ brought flesh from heaven, and merely passed through the Blessed Virgin, as water passes through a channel; thirdly, Nestorius, who asserts that the Blessed Virgin was not the Mother of God because she was not the Mother of the Divinity; to whom Cyril well replies that she is truly the Mother of God although she did not bring forth His Divinity, but His humanity only, because she brought forth the Man, namely Jesus, Who is truly God: as a father is truly called the father of his son, although

he does not beget his soul, but only his flesh, because he begets a man who consists of soul and flesh.

Ver. 32.—*He shall be great*, &c. *Great* both as God and as man. And He shall be called the Son of the Highest; that is through the hypostatic union. He can and ought of right to be called the Son of God.

Ver. 33.—*And He shall reign over the house of Jacob.* That is, over the Church, as Bede and others say. This kingdom in David was a temporal one, but in Christ a spiritual and eternal one, because He reigns over His saints here by grace, and in heaven He will reign over them in glory. See what I have said on the kingdom of Christ, Matt. xxvii. 11.

Ver. 34.—*And Mary said to the angel*, &c. The Virgin had no doubt concerning the truth of the prophesy and promise of the angel, as Calvin blasphemously asserts, but she was anxious as to the manner of its fulfilment, lest the conception of a son should involve a loss of virginity, and a breaking of the vow which she had made concerning it. So S. Ambrose, Augustine, &c.

We may learn here how great was the zeal and love for virginity which the Blessed Virgin had, because, as Nyssen says, "she preferred chastity to the angelic tidings; and preferred being a virgin to being absolutely the Mother of God, as S. Anselm says. For virginity is in itself a virtue most pleasing to God, while maternity is not so absolutely. I say *absolutely;* for in other respects maternity is an incomprehensible dignity bestowed by God (as God Himself is incomprehensible) and an abyss of all graces. For on account of this the Blessed Virgin was endowed with more than angelic virginity, humility, charity, and other virtues, that she might be worthy to become the Mother of God. So S. Augustine, S. Thomas, &c.

Wherefore Bede says, that by a divine gift it was granted to her first among women to make an offering of her virginity to God. And Albertus Magnus (*super Missus Est*, c. 82) says, "The Blessed Virgin is the mother of all who are in virginity, since she was the first to make an offering of her virginity to God, through which

offering she became the mother of all virgins." Wherefore the Blessed Virgin, being most anxious concerning her virginity and the vow she had made with respect to it, makes mention of it as it were by way of objection to the angel. For there was a conflict in her between the desire of conceiving the Son of God and the fear of losing her virginity: and therefore she obtained both. The sense therefore is: "I surely believe that I shall conceive and bring forth Jesus, the Son of God, but I am doubtful as to the way in which this will be. I know not a man, because I have made a vow of virginity: if God wishes to dispense with this vow, though it be hard, yet I will obey the will of God: but if He seeks to know my desire, I certainly declare that I earnestly desire to preserve the virginity that I have vowed to Him: for He who is a most pure spirit, and therefore the first virgin, has Himself put it into my mind; and it will be honourable to my Son Jesus if He is born of a virgin. For I know what has been foretold by Isaiah, *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth* Emmanuel; and it may be the will of God that I should be that virgin. If it is so, be it so." Whence on hearing immediately from Gabriel that she would conceive not by a man, but by the Holy Spirit, she immediately breaks forth with great joy of heart, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And it was this word that God wished to hear, so that through the profession of her virginity she might merit to become the Son of God.

Ver. 35.—*And the Angel answered. . . . the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*, &c. Mark here that the Incarnation is limited only to the Person of the Word, or Son of God: for He alone was incarnate and made man, and not the Father nor the Holy Spirit: and yet the incarnation was the work of the whole Trinity, as its efficient cause and not only of the Son. Yet this work of the Incarnation is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, first, because it was a most holy work; secondly, because the works relating to our redemption, and those which most display God's goodness are appropriated to the Holy Spirit, because He proceeds forth as the ideal love of the Father and the Son: in the same way wisdom

is appropriated to the Son as the Word, and omnipotence to the Father as the first principle and origin. Moreover, the Holy Spirit was the framer of the humanity of Christ, because He fashioned and animated it, but He cannot be called its Father, because He did not contribute or communicate anything to it of His own substance. S. Augustine (*Enchirid. c.* 28).

Further S. Cyril (*Catech.* 12) shows that a virgin by the power of God could conceive and bring forth; and first, in arguing with the Gentiles, he says, "How is it that ye, who say that stones when thrown were changed into men, maintain that a virgin cannot bring forth? How is it that ye, who fable that a daughter was born out of the head of Jupiter, maintain that it is impossible that one can be born of a virgin's womb?" And then, arguing with the Jews, he says, "Sara was barren, and she brought forth a child beyond the way of nature at an age when women have lost the power (to do so): either then deny both, or grant both, for the same God was the worker of both." He further says, that God out of the virgin Adam formed a virgin woman, namely Eve; why could He not then in like manner form a virgin man out of a virgin woman?

Shall come upon thee. In order that the conception of Christ, and Christ Himself, might be holy, not only by reason of the hypostatic union with the Word, but also by reason of so divine a conception, for He was conceived not by a man or an angel, but by the Holy Ghost. Wherefore Christ, by virtue of this conception, was not the son of Adam, so as to derive original sin from him, and be born a sinner, as we all are born, but He was most pure and most holy.

Again Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, because it was fitting, since He was both God and man, that both should be recognised in the conception. For the conception itself declares that He was Man; for He would not have been conceived unless He had been man; and the manner of the conception shows that He was also God; for to be conceived by a virgin without a husband, shows that He who was conceived was more than man.

Mystically, S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catech.* 12) says, the Lord willed to be born of a virgin, to signify that His members would be born according to the Spirit of the Church, which is a virgin.

Lactantius gives another reason, which is that Christ, Who in heaven is ἀμήτως, *without a mother*, might be on earth ἀπάτως, *without a father*. But the first reason is the chief one, namely, that Christ might be born without original sin.

Proclus (*Hom. de Nativ.*) says, "Mary is both handmaid and mother, both virgin and heaven itself. She is the one bridge by which God comes down to man. She is the wonderful web of that economy, of whom and in whom, in a certain ineffable manner, the admirable fabric of that union was wrought, of which the Holy Spirit was the weaver, the power overshadowing from on high was the spinner; the wool was the old and rough garment of Adam; the woof was the pure flesh of the Virgin; the weaver's shuttle was the immeasurable grace of her who was with child; the artificer was the Word which passed in through the hearing."

The power of the Highest, &c. According to Euthymius and Maldonatus, the power of the Highest is the Holy Spirit, Who with power brings the holy works of God to perfection, so that these words are an explanation of what the angel had said, *the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.* So Christ (cap. xxiv. 49) says to the Apostles, *Tarry in this city* (*Jerusalem*) *until ye be endued with power from on high, i.e.* with the Holy Spirit. This it is of which the Church speaks, "Almighty and everlasting God, Who by the co-operation of the Holy Spirit didst prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary that she might be worthy to be made a fit habitation for thy Son."

Shall overshadow thee. S. Gregory (33 *Moral. c.* 2) explains thus, "The Word of God in thee will assume a body, which will be as it were a shadow of Deity, for it will as a shadow veil and conceal It." And again he says (18 *Moral.* 12), "The human body in thee shall receive the incorporeal light of Divinity." Origen says also, that the Body of Christ is called a shadow, because in the Passion it was humiliated and obscured after the manner of a shadow.

S. Ambrose (*on Psalm* 119) understands by the sha low this present and mortal life which the Spirit gave to Christ, for this is, as it were, a shadow of the true life and of eternity.

S. Augustine (*Quæst. V. et N. T. c.* 15) says, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, i.e.* shall attemper itself to thee, as a shadow adjusts itself to a body, for thy human weakness could not contain the fulness of its force and power.

But more simply, the meaning is, It will cover thee as with a veil, *i.e.*, will secretly work a mighty operation in thee; for it will be such and so great a one that no man or angel can penetrate into or comprehend it. For, first, it will form in thee the perfect humanity of Christ; and, secondly, it will unite the same in a certain ineffable manner to the Person of the Word.

Again, *to overshadow* may be taken as answering to the Hebrew word עָנַן, *to cover with a cloud*, and so *to rain upon*, for a cloud pours forth rain, and hence by the shadow and the cloud is signified rain, which is poured forth from the cloud and renders the earth fruitful. An allusion seems to be made to Psalm lxxii. 6, *He shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool.*

Wherefore that Holy Thing which shall be born of Thee shall be called the Son of God. Because the Holy Spirit will come upon thee, and cause thee to conceive a son, the Son which shall be born of thee will be holy from His very conception, yea, the Holy of Holies, because He will be called, and through His hypostatic union with the Word will truly be, the natural and Only Begotten Son of God, and will be called so by God, by angels, and by men; for He who is conceived by the Holy Spirit must needs be most Holy. Maldonatus somewhat differently says, "Jesus is called the Son of God, because He will not be begotten as the rest of men are, but by God through the power of the Spirit, and therefore He will be holy, and the Son of God." So (Luke iii. 38) Adam is called the Son of God, because he was created not by man but by God.

He says, *That Holy Thing*, not *Man*, to show that this Son will

not be a mere man, but besides being a man will also be God (*S. Greg.* xviii. *Moral. c.* 27); and also to declare that Jesus will be holy with a holiness altogether perfect and natural on account of the hypostatic union (Suarez, iii. *p. disp.* 18 *sect.* 1): so that the meaning is, Jesus, Who will be born of thee, will be Most Holy, yea, Holiness itself.

S. Bernard (*Serm.* 4 *super Missus Est*) says, "Why does he say merely *that Holy Thing*, and no more? Because there was not any proper or worthy expression that he could use. If he had said that holy flesh, or that holy man, or whatever expression of such a kind he had used, he would have seemed to himself to have said but little. He uses, therefore, the indefinite expression, *That Holy Thing;* because whatever it was that the Virgin brought forth, It was without doubt holy and in a singular manner holy, both through the sanctification of the Spirit and the assumption of the Word."

The Son of God by nature, Who would make all the faithful, sons of God by grace.

Ver. 36.—*And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth.* The angel confirms the miracle of the coming birth of Jesus of the Virgin and the Holy Spirit by the similar miracle of the conception of John by Elizabeth who was barren. At the same time he silently admonishes the Blessed Virgin that she should visit John and Elizabeth, and fill them with the Holy Spirit by saluting them.

For with God nothing shall be impossible (Vulgate, *non omne verbum, no word*, which is a Hebraism), *i.e.* nothing, however difficult or incredible to man; or, as others take it, *no word*, *i.e.* no promise; which means that God is able to perform all things that He has promised, because He is omnipotent; and He will really perform them because He is faithful. He says *word*, because it is as easy to God to do a thing as it is to us to speak a word, and because He spake a word only and all things were made. "Inasmuch as," says S. Bernard (*Serm.* 4 *on Missus Est*), "with God neither does His word fall short of His intention, because He is Truth; nor His deed fall short of His word, because He is Power; nor the manner (in which the deed is done) fall short of the deed, because He is Wisdom." "God," says S. Augustine (*lib.* 5 *de Civ. c.* 10), "can do all things

except those things which to be able to do is a mark not of power, but of weakness; and which if he were able to do He would not be omnipotent; such as to die, to deceive, to err, to sin."

The angel stood, and was silent, eagerly expecting the answer and consent of the Virgin. Whence S. Bernard (*Serm.* 4, *super Missus Est*) says, that Adam and all the patriarchs and prophets, being anxious concerning the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of men, were waiting for this consent; and he adds "the whole world, prostrate at thy knees, is waiting for this: and rightly, since on thy words depend the consolation of the miserable, the redemption of the captives, the liberation of the damned, the salvation, in short, of all the sons of Adam. Make answer, O Virgin, speedily, speak the word which earth, which the dwellers below and the dwellers on high are waiting for. The King and Lord of all things Himself desires thine assent, by which His purpose is to save the world."

Ver. 38.—*And Mary said*, &c. Mark the humility, modesty, and resignation of the Virgin, for though saluted by the angel as Mother of God, she calls herself His handmaid, not His mother; handmaid by nature, mother by grace. Pet. Dam. (*Serm.* 3 *de Nativ. Virg.*) And S. Bernard (*Serm. in Apoc.* 12) says, "*A great sign: deservedly is she made mistress of all who declared herself servant of all.*"

Be it unto me (*Fiat*). This word shows that she consented and yielded her assent to the angel with respect to the conception of the Word; also that she wished, desired, and earnestly prayed for the Incarnation of the Messiah, so that He might redeem and save mankind. For this the Blessed Virgin most ardently desired and prayed for. "*Be it so*, is a mark of desire, not a sign of doubt." S. Bernard (*Serm.* 4 *sup. Missus Est*).

There is a question at what precise moment the Son of God became incarnate. 1. Andrew * of Crete is of opinion that He was incarnate before the angel came to the Blessed Virgin. For his words, *the Lord is with thee*, clearly signify that the King Himself had come.

* Elias is written by error for Andrew, and many, if not all his editors, have followed à Lapide. The passage referred to is found in the sermon of Andrew of Crete on the Annunciation.

2. Nicephorus maintains that Christ became incarnate when the angel saluted her and said *Hail, thou art full of grace* (*Lib.* i. *c.* 8). S. Jerome (*Ep.* 140) and S. Gregory Thaumaturgus favour this opinion.

3. Others appear to think that He became incarnate when the Angel said *The Lord is with thee.* S. Augustine (*Serm.* 2 *de Annunc.*) and S. Thomas (3 *p. qu.* 30 *art.* 4) and others so explain it.

But these opinions cannot be true; because the angel after the *Hail*, &c. adds, *Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb;* therefore she had not yet conceived. Again the Blessed Virgin giving her assent to the angel says, *Be it unto me according to thy word;* therefore it had not yet taken place.

I say then that the Word was incarnate as soon as the Blessed Virgin had given her assent to the angel; for he was sent for this purpose; for it was not fitting that Christ should be conceived without the consent or knowledge of His Virgin Mother; as soon then as she had spoken the words, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, Be it unto me according to thy word*, the Holy Spirit formed the Body of Christ, and joined It Hypostatically to the Word, or Person of the Son of God; in the same way as when the priest in consecration says, *This is my Body*, by the power of these words the bread is transubstantiated into the Body of Christ. This again is clear from the fact that as soon as the Virgin had given her consent the angel, having, as it were, fulfilled his mission, departed from her. It is confirmed too by the fact that soon after the Blessed Virgin had said *Be it unto me*, &c., when she saluted Elizabeth, being saluted by her in return she was called the Mother of the Lord, *i.e.* of Christ Who is God. The Virgin, therefore, when she said, *Be it unto me*, &c., was made as it were the spouse of God, and our flesh was made the spouse of the Word.

To those who maintain a contrary opinion it may be replied—1. that Andrew of Crete seems to have been of an opposite opinion, but that he was alone in maintaining it; for the rest contradict him. 2. That Nicephorus by the words *Hail*, &c., understands the whole of the salutation and annunciation made by the angel, at the end of which the Word was made flesh. 3. S. Augustine, S. Thomas, and

Damian are to be understood (*when they say the Lord is with thee*) not as to what had already taken place, but as to what was immediately going to take place.

The Blessed Virgin in the conception of the Son received an extraordinary increase of grace and perfect sanctification; and this, says Suarez, may not be doubted without temerity. Whence Bede (*Hom. de. Visit.*) says, "Who can say or measure what grace then filled the spirit of the Mother of God, when so great a light from heaven shone forth in the mother of His forerunner?" S. Bernard gives a reason for this (*Vol.* 1, *conclus.* 61, *art* 1, *cap.* 12), "In order that God should generate God, no especial arrangement was needed on the part of God, since according to His nature it was fitting that in the way of nature His intellect should produce the Word, in all things equal to Himself; but that a woman should conceive and bring forth God is and was a miracle; for there was a necessity, so to say, that she should be raised to a certain divine equality by means of a certain quasi-infinity of perfections and graces, which equality no creature had ever experienced. Whence, as I believe, no human or angelic intellect has ever been able to attain to that inscrutable abyss of all gifts of the Holy Spirit which descended on the Blessed Virgin in the hour of the Divine conception."

And the angel departed from her. The Blessed Virgin made known to some that Gabriel did not depart immediately, but stayed with her for nine hours, being overcome with astonishment at the Incarnation of the Word in her, and that he adored the Word incarnate; as if rapt in admiration at the incredible modesty and majesty of the Virgin, he were unable to depart. (The records of S. George in Alga in Lusitania mention this tradition.) But though this is a pious tradition it is not to be regarded as certainly true.

Ver. 39.—*And Mary arose in those days.* Not on the same day on which she was saluted by the angel, but after two or three days. What was the reason of her going away? 1. That she might announce the conception of the Word to others. For Christ having become incarnate in her, willed immediately to begin His

mission as a Saviour, for which He had been sent by the Father. Whence S. Ambrose says, "She departed, not as disbelieving in the oracle, or as uncertain about the messenger, or doubtful of the example, but as rejoicing in the fulfilment of her wish, conscientious in the performance of her duty, and hastening on account of her joy."

2. To cleanse John from original sin, and to fill him and his mother Elizabeth with the Holy Spirit, and that so the honour and devotion of all to Christ might be increased.

3. To congratulate her kinswoman on the miraculous conception of John.

4. To give to all future ages a remarkable example of humility and charity which she showed in visiting Elizabeth, though she was now made Mother of God and Mistress of the world.

Wherefore, under the title of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, many congregations have been instituted for visiting the poor and the sick, and those in prison, and recently under this title S. Francis of Sales, Bishop of Geneva, has instituted a congregation of religious women, who are well known throughout France, for ministering to the sick.

To the hill country. That is Hebron, according to Baronius and others; or the hill country of Judæa.

Tropologically, the soul filled with God, as the soul of the Blessed Virgin was, ascends the mountain heights, *i.e.* toils up the steep paths of virtue. "The Word having been conceived in the mind," Bede says, "we must ascend to the heights of virtue along the way of love; and the city of Judah, *i.e.* of confession and praise, must be reached by us; and in the perfection of faith, hope, and love, we must abide there for three months."

With haste. S. Ambrose mentions as the first cause of her haste that she might not tarry long out of the house in the public ways "Learn, ye virgins, not to loiter in the streets, nor mingle in any public talk." He also adds a second reason, because she was full of joy and the Holy Spirit; "the grace of the Holy Spirit knows nothing of slow endeavours."

Origen gives a third reason, because Christ in the womb of the Virgin was hastening to cleanse John from original sin, and to sanctify him. "For Mary," says S. Ambrose, "who before dwelt alone in the secret of her chamber, neither virgin modesty caused to shrink from the public gaze, nor the rugged mountains from fulfilling her purpose, nor the length of the journey from performing her duty."

To a city of Judah. Jerusalem, according to Albertus Magnus and S. Bonaventura; but Jerusalem is generally mentioned by name, Jerusalem also is in the tribe of Benjamin, not of Judah. It is better, therefore, with Toletus and Baronius, to suppose that Hebron is meant; for it was situated in the hill country of Judah.

It is very probable that the Blessed Virgin first went to Jerusalem, since the feast of the Passover was near, and then in the Temple returned thanks to God, and made an offering of herself and her child Jesus to Him.

And entered into the house of Zacharias. This house is thus described by Adrichomedus on the authority of Nicephorus in his description of the Holy Land, "It is one mile distant from Emmaus, near the hills. It was still inhabited in the time of Saligniacus, and travellers were accustomed to salute it reverently. There John was born and circumcised, and concealed in a cave that he might not be slain with the children of Bethlehem by Herod, &c.

And saluted Elizabeth, with the usual Hebrew salutation, *Peace be to thee.* God intended by means of Elizabeth, being a matron advanced in years, to make known to the world the conception of the Virgin, and the secret Incarnation of the Word that had taken place in her.

Elizabeth. Not Zacharias; both because he was deaf, and because it was not becoming that a man should be saluted by the Virgin. Moreover, S. Ambrose says, "She was the first to give her salutation; for the more chaste a virgin is, the more humble she ought to be, and the more ready to give way to her elders. Let her then be the mistress of humility in whom is the profession of chastity."

Ver. 41.—*And it came to pass when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary*, &c. Notice with S. Ambrose, that Elizabeth was the first to hear the salutation of Mary, but John was the first to perceive the spirit and effect of her salutation; for to him, as the future forerunner of Christ, this salutation of the Virgin, yea, even of Christ, was chiefly directed. Theophylact says, "The voice of the Virgin was the voice of God incarnate in her."

It is a question here whether the leaping of John for joy (Vulgate *exultavit*, Greek ἐσκίρτησε) was a natural or rational movement. Calvin thinks that it was only a natural one; but all the Fathers and Orthodox Doctors are of a contrary opinion. Origen says, "Then first Jesus made His forerunner a prophet," and Irenæus (*lib.* 3 *c.* 18) says, "He recognised the Lord in the womb, and leaping for joy saluted Him." And S. Gregory (*lib.* 3 *Moral. c.* 5), "In his mother's womb he was filled with the spirit of prophecy." So also S. Cyril, S. Ambrose, S. Chrysostom. All these maintain that this leaping of John was not only supernatural, but showed an active use of reason, and proceeded from true joyfulness of mind; and this is clear from the words of Elizabeth; *The babe leaped in my womb for joy.*

Secondly, this is clear, likewise, from the circumstance that John communicated his joy to his mother.

Thirdly, because in like manner the Blessed Virgin rejoiced when she sang the Magnificat, therefore also John rejoiced, who was the chief end and object of the visitation of the Blessed Virgin and of all these wonders.

John at this time received the gift of prophecy, as the Fathers already quoted show. He likewise received the extraordinary gifts which befitted the future forerunner of Christ. For this had been predicted by the angel when he said, "*he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.*" In John, therefore, that saying of S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 30) is true, "his leaping was a sign of perfect soundness;" and also, of sanctity.

Hence some think that John was free from sinful desire, and never committed venial sin; but this privilege seems to have been

peculiar to the Blessed Virgin, to whom John was inferior. He had, therefore, sinful desire, and did commit venial sin, falling into it unawares, but, perhaps, never deliberately. For it is a rule of S. Augustine and of theologians, that whoever has or has had original sin, has also sinful desire, and consequently commits venial sin; but John had original sin, therefore he must have committed venial sin.

Learn, morally, of what advantage the salutation and prayers of the Saints are, and especially of the Blessed Virgin, who by one word of salutation filled both John and Elizabeth with the Holy Spirit. "Not only the words, but the very aspect of the Saints is full of spiritual grace," says S. Chrysostom. For the Saints, and above all the Blessed Virgin, are full of the fiery spirit of love. Wherefore he who strives to make other men spiritual should first fill himself with the Divine Spirit; for thus when he speaks he will breathe the same forth upon others, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. God also uses such men as suitable instruments united to Himself. For He is a most pure and powerful spirit; wherefore He accomplishes mighty spiritual results by means of spiritual men full of zeal, as being like Himself.

And Elizabeth was filled, &c. She who was before just and holy (verse 6) is now made much more just and holy, and besides received the gift of prophecy. Moreover John, as I said, was first filled with the Spirit, and then filled his mother also with the same; because by his own holiness, merits, and prayers, he obtained for his mother that she should be filled with the Holy Spirit, of which he was himself full. So S. Ambrose says, "Elizabeth first heard the word, but John first experienced the grace. The mother was not filled before the son, but when the son had been filled with the Holy Spirit, he filled the mother also."

Ver. 42.—*And she spake out with a loud voice and said, Blessed art thou among women.* Thou art most blessed of all women because thou hast been chosen to be the Mother of God Whom the whole world cannot receive.

Blessed is the fruit of thy womb. The fountain of all the blessings and graces bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin by God was to be the

mother of God; for God adorned His mother with every grace in order that she might become an habitation worthy of Him, even that she might be worthy to become the Mother of God, and whom would such a Son bless rather than His mother. Elizabeth therefore, by the inspiration of the Spirit knew that Mary had already conceived, and that the Son of God was incarnate in her. And "He is Blessed, not only as thou art, among women, but, absolutely, above angels, men, and all creatures, as being the Creator and Lord of all. Again the rest of the sons of Eve are all under a curse, because they contract original sin from her and from Adam. Christ alone is Blessed because He is not the natural son of Adam, but was supernaturally conceived in the Virgin by the Holy Ghost."

She alludes to the prophecy and promise made to David, *Of the fruit of thy body shall I set upon thy seat*, Psalm 132, 11.

Ver. 43.—*And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?* These are words of the greatest humility and reverence; John imitated his mother, saying when Christ came to be baptized of him, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest thou to me?"

Lord, that is God, Who is called absolutely *the Lord*, because He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Hence it is clear—1. That the humanity of Christ was already in Christ endowed with life and united to the Word or Son of God. 2. That the Blessed Virgin is rightly called θεότοκος, *i.e.*, Mother of God and not only χριστότοκος, Mother of Christ, as Nestorius maintained. 3. That in Christ there are two natures, the human, for this alone could He take of His Virgin Mother; and the Divine, which the Father alone communicated to Him; but one Person, not human, but Divine. For if in Christ there had been two persons, as there are two natures, God could not properly be said to have been born of a Virgin, to have suffered and been crucified, but another person, that is to say, a man, or the person of a man; but now it is properly so said, because there is one person in Christ; which is the reason why the attributes of the one nature may be ascribed in the concrete to the other, so that this man, Jesus, may properly be called God, eternal

and Almighty; and on the other hand, God in Him may properly be called man, passible and mortal, yea, He may even be said to have suffered and died; because it is the same Person, which on account of the two natures which It has, is at the same time God and man, and accordingly assumes to Itself the actions and attributes both of God and man. For action belongs to persons; and this sole (divine) Person in Christ is signified alike by the word man, or Jesus, and by the word God or Son of God. Wherefore what is truly said of one is also truly said of the other.

Ver. 44.—*The babe leaped.* Symbolically, the leaping of John prefigured his own martyrdom; for by his dancing he represented the dancing of the daughter of Herodias, by which having pleased Herod, she asked and obtained of him the head of John.

Ver. 45.—*Blessed*, &c. Elizabeth, therefore, knew by the Holy Spirit that the Blessed Virgin had believed the angel when he announced the conception and nativity of Christ. "Blessed art thou, both in fact because thou already bearest Christ within thee, and also in hope, because thou shalt bring forth Him Who will make thee and all who believe in Him blessed in heaven: Blessed therefore art thou before God and men." Elizabeth silently censures the unbelief of her own husband.

Ver. 46.—*And Mary said, My soul*, &c. Fitly does Mary make answer to the praises of herself celebrated by Elizabeth, by referring them to their fountain, *i.e.* to God. S. Bernard (*Serm. in Apoc.* 12) says, "Truly this is a song of high praise, but also of devout humility which suffers her not to retain anything for herself, but gives all back rather to Him Whose blessings bestowed upon herself she was celebrating. Thou, she says, magnifiest the Mother of the Lord, but my soul doth magnify the Lord. Thou declarest that thy son leaped for joy at my voice, but my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. He rejoices as the friend of the bridegroom at the voice of the bridegroom. Thou sayest she is blessed which believed, but the cause of faith and blessedness is the regard of the Celestial Goodness, so that on this account the rather all generations will call me Blessed, because God hath regarded the

low estate of his handmaid." S. Bernard then shows that the Blessed Virgin, though she was most humble, yet in the faith of the promise made by the angel she was lifted high in soul, so that she doubted not that she was elected to so great a mystery, but believed that she would soon be the true Mother of God and man; for the grace of God so works in His elect, "that neither does humility make them feeble spirited, nor does exaltation of soul make them proud." God magnifies man in one way, and man magnifies God in another. God magnifies a man when He heaps upon him riches and honours, graces and gifts, and raises him above others; but man cannot magnify God in this way, for he cannot add anything to Him either great or small. He is said therefore to magnify God when he proclaims His greatness, *i.e.* His majesty, almighty power, holiness, wisdom, &c. The meaning of the Blessed Virgin's words therefore is, Thou, O Elizabeth, magnifiest me in honouring me with the magnificent title of Mother of God, but I magnify God Who has made me great, in giving me so great a Son, Who is God Himself, and has thought fit to bring to pass in me the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Word.

The Incarnation of the Word was the greatest of all the works of God. 1. It was a work of the highest power, to unite heaven to earth, God to man; 2. of the highest goodness, by which God communicated Himself wholly to man; 3. of the highest wisdom, by which He effected this union in a Divine Person, so that the integrity of each nature, the human and the divine, was preserved to it.

With this, therefore, begins the song of the Blessed Virgin, which of all the songs of Holy Scripture, of Moses, Deborah, &c., is the most excellent, as being the most full of the Divine Spirit and exultation. The Church, accordingly, uses it daily in the Office of Vespers, in order that she may by it, in the highest manner, celebrate the glories and praises of God, and render the highest thanks to Him for the Incarnation of the Word and His other gifts, and that she may drink in the same affections of devotion, piety, love, and exultation that in uttering it the Blessed Virgin drank in from heaven.

There are three parts in this song. In the first (verse 46–50), the Blessed Virgin praises God for the peculiar blessings bestowed upon herself by God, especially for the conception of the Word. In the second (verse 50–54), she praises Him for the common blessings bestowed upon His whole people before the coming of Christ. In the third (verse 54 to the end), she returns to this greatest blessing of the Incarnation of the Word which had been promised to the fathers, and made known to herself.

My soul. Not only my tongue, nor my hand only, but my soul itself with all its power magnifies God. From the inmost recesses of my soul, with all the powers of my mind, I praise and glorify God; I employ and entirely devote all the strength of my soul in His praise; so that my understanding contemplates Him alone, my will loves and celebrates no being but Him, my memory dwells upon nothing but Him, my mouth speaks of and celebrates nothing but Him, my hand performs only those things which tend to His service, my feet move forwards only to those things which tend to His glory.

Symbolically, Toletus says, The Blessed Virgin rightly says *my soul*—1. Because she alone had her soul in her own power, and was mistress over it, because she possessed it in patience, having dominion over all its affections and passions. But we do not possess our souls, because we are ourselves possessed by anger, pride, concupiscence or some other like passion. 2. Because she had wholly delivered up her soul to her Son; and those things which belonged to her Son were hers also. Whence her soul having been delivered up to her Son returned entirely to her own power, and she truly calls it *my soul.* 3. On account of her loving affection for it; for the more any one loves God, the more he loves his own soul. Since, therefore, the Blessed Virgin loved God chiefly above all men, and had never committed any sin, she loved her own soul very greatly. And that which we love, on account of our love for it we call our own. She therefore who so loved her own soul, truly called it her own.

And my spirit hath rejoiced. Exultavit. The Blessed Virgin, admiring the divine power, holiness, justice, benignity of the Spirit

of God incarnate in her, exults and leaps and sings for joy. Euthymius (*in Ps.* 9) says, "Exultation is, as it were, an intensified joy, which causes the heart to leap up vehemently with excess of joy, and to be raised on high." Cajetan also says, "Exultation is an overflowing joy, which breaks forth, modestly however and seriously, in the external signs of gesticulation, singing, and jubilation.

There is an allusion here to Isaiah lxi. 10, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God;* and still more to the words of Anna, 1 Sam. ii. 1., *My heart rejoiceth in the Lord*, &c., for as Anna, who was barren, rejoiced in conceiving Samuel by the miraculous help of God, so the Blessed Virgin rejoiced in conceiving Emmanuel (of whom Samuel was a type) by the power of the Holy Spirit.

S. Augustine, writing on the Magnificat, shows that the Virgin here does two things: first, she praises the goodness and mercy of God, as in the preceding verse she had praised His power and majesty; secondly, she pours forth the expression of the sweetness and delight which she had received in the conception of her Son; and in this he says that the Mother of God imitated the angels, who in heaven perform these two things, viz., meditate on the incomprehensible majesty of God, and enjoy His ineffable goodness and sweetness; and they so admire them as to rejoice in and love them. His words are, "Thou hast seen His majesty, thou hast tasted His sweetness; therefore that which thou hast received inwardly, thou hast poured forth abroad, and thou hast rejoiced in His justice. *My spirit hath rejoiced;* the soul magnifies; the spirit rejoices. *In God my Saviour:* the word God denotes His power; the word Saviour (or salvation) denotes His mercy. For these are two things which the spirits of angels and saints in that fountain of good drink in by eternal contemplation; viz., the incomprehensible Majesty of God, and His ineffable goodness; the one of which produces a sacred fear, and the other love; they venerate God for His majesty; they love Him for His goodness; so that love being joined with reverential fear may not be lost, and fear being joined with love may not have torment."

Lastly, as in the conception of the Word the very highest of blessings was bestowed upon the Virgin, so she experienced the very highest exaltation on account of it, so that her spirit seemed to leap forth for joy from her body, and to hasten forth towards God; and perhaps it would have done so, had not God by His power kept it in her body. For when she died several years after, she died not of sickness, but of love, joy, and the desire of seeing her Son, as Suarez and other theologians think. Moreover this exaltation, Albertus says, was not transient, but remained as a habit through the whole of her life. He adds, that on account of her possessing this continual exultation in God, she was above all entirely dead to the world and to this mortal life; so that her life was always hid with Christ in God, and being present in the angelic court she dwelt in the sanctuary of God, and she could say in a more excellent manner than Paul or any other creature, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. vi.

My Spirit. That is, *my soul*, as Euthymius and others say; as if *my Spirit hath rejoiced*, &c., were the same as *my soul doth magnify*, &c. But the opinion of Toletus and others is better, who think that *the spirit* is more than *the soul;* wherefore by the soul they understand the intellect, and by the spirit the will. More simply, by *the soul* you may understand the lower part of the soul, which regards natural objects; by *the spirit* the superior part, which beholds spiritual and divine things. The soul, therefore, is natural and contemplates natural things; the spirit is supernatural and contemplates heavenly things. The spirit, therefore, signifies.—1. the mind; 2. the vehement and fervent impulse of the mind towards joy; 3. that this impulse is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Spirit, as being the superior, draws the soul and body along with it, so that they likewise may exult with joy, according to the saying in Psalm 84, "My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God."

In God my Saviour. Vulgate, *salutari meo;* Greek, σωτῆρί μου. The Syriac renders the words *in God my lifegiver* (*vivificatore meo*). Who will bestow life, *i.e.* liberty, grace, and glory on me and all the faithful.

She says *my* Saviour—1. Because Jesus is my son. 2. Because He is also my Saviour, both because He has preserved me above others from all sin, and filled me with all grace, and because He has made me the mediatrix of salvation for all men, so that I am as it were the cause and the mother of salvation to all who are to be saved.

S. John of Damascus, when the hand with which he had written the defence of the worship of sacred images had been cut off by Leo the Isaurian, and had been miraculously restored by the Blessed Virgin, sang the words, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, and in His Mother, for He that is mighty hath done to me great things."

Ver. 48.—*For He hath regarded*, &c. S. Augustine (*super Magnificat*) says, "This is the grace of her exultation, that He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: it is as if she said, because I exult in His grace, therefore my exultation is from Him; and because I love His gifts on account of Himself, therefore I exult in Him. S. Bernard (*Serm.* 57 *in Cant.*) says, "God regards the earth and causes it to tremble; He regards Mary and infuses grace. He hath regarded, she says, the lowliness of His handmaiden, for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. These are not the words of one lamenting or fearing, but of one rejoicing. Hence He says to her, *Arise* quickly, my love, my dove, my fair one, and come away."

Lowliness, or *low estate*. Vulgate, *humilitatem*; Greek, ταπείνωσιν. Humility here properly means lowliness of estate, not the virtue of humility as opposed to pride, for this is called ταπεινοφροσύνη; for humility alone among virtues is ignorant of itself; and he who boasts of his humility is proud, not humble.

Secondly, however, by humility may be understood the virtue itself of humility; for on account of this God had regard to the Blessed Virgin, and chose her for His mother; for a humble person recognises his virtues as being the gifts of God; wherefore among them he sees also his own humility, but he ascribes it not to his own strength, but to the grace which he had received from God.

As, therefore, the Blessed Virgin here recognises her election to be the Mother of God (which was a far greater thing), so likewise she recognises that she was fittingly adorned for so great a dignity by her humility, virginity, and other virtues which had been imparted to her by God. For a humble person recognises his own low estate, his misery, his poverty, yea, even his own nothingness, and ascribes all that he is and has to God, Whose he is, and says with the Psalmist, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the glory.*

Listen to S. Augustine (*Serm. 2 de Assump.*), "O true humility which hath borne God to men, hath given life to mortals, made new heavens, and a pure earth, and given liberty to the souls of men. The humility of Mary was made the heavenly ladder by which God came down to earth. For what does *regarded* mean but approved? For many seem in the sight of men to be humble, but their humility is not regarded by the Lord. For if they were truly humble, then they would not wish to be praised by men, and their spirit would not rejoice in the world but in God." And S. Chrysostom (*Hom. 2 in Ps.* 50) says, "The greatest sacrifice of all is humility, for the same man who by sinning has separated himself from God, subjects himself to Him by humility, when he is converted to penitence." And lastly S. Bernard says, "It is humility which truth begets for us, and it has not heat, and it is humility which love forms and inflames. The latter consists in affection, the former in knowledge: by the former we learn that we are nothing, and we learn it from ourselves and our own weakness; by the latter we tread underfoot the glory of the world, and we learn it from Him Who emptied Himself, and Who, when men sought to make Him a king, fled; but when He was sought for reproaches and for the Cross, He did not flee, but offered Himself willingly." The Blessed Virgin had both these (humility and love) in an eminent and heroic degree.

For behold from henceforth, &c. S. Augustine says here, "Thou, O Elizabeth, sayest concerning me, *Blessed art thou who believedst*; but I say, *From this time* (when I conceived the Son of God) *all*

generations shall call me blessed. Mary, who was humble before God, and lowly before men on account of God, obtained witness that she was regarded in both respects: for both her humility before God was acceptable, and her low estate before men was changed into glory. Wherefore it follows, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

Blessed. Gerson (*super. Magnificat*) says, "Thou art worthy of our praises, O Holy Virgin, thrice and four times blessed. Blessed—1. because thou didst believe. 2. Because thou art full of grace, according to the salutation of Gabriel. 3. Because Blessed is the fruit of thy womb. 4. Because He that is mighty hath done to thee great things. 5. Because thou art the Mother of the Lord. 6. Because thou art fruitful and yet retainest the honour of virginity. 7. Because thou seemest to have none like thee, among those that were before thee, or among those that come after."

All generations. All future ages and generations of the faithful. Cardinal Hugo says, "All generations, *i.e.* all nations of Jews and Gentiles, of men and women, of rich and poor, of angels and of men, because all through her have received a saving benefit: men have received reconciliation; angels restoration (of their numbers). For Christ the Son of God wrought salvation in the middle of the earth, that is, in the womb of Mary, which by a certain wonderful propriety is called the middle of the earth. For, as S. Bernard says, towards it look both those who dwell in heaven and those who dwell in the lower regions, *i.e.* in purgatory, and those who dwell in the world. The first, that they may be filled up again, the second that they may be delivered, the third that they may be reconciled. And then, assigning the reason, he adds, from henceforth therefore, O Blessed Virgin, all generations shall call thee blessed, because thou hast brought forth life, grace, and glory for all generations, life for the dead, grace for sinners, glory for the miserable. Therefore it is said of her, Judith, c. xv. 10, "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the great rejoicing of our people, because thou hast done coura-

geously. The first is the word of the angels, whose loss was repaired by her; the second is the word of men, whose sadness was by her changed into joy; the third is the word of women, whose dishonour was done away with by her; the fourth is the voice of the dead, whose captivity was brought back by her."

The truth of this prophecy of the Blessed Virgin is clear from the event; for we have seen her worshipped and honoured by all nations and generations with shrines, churches, festivals, congregations, societies of religious, vows, supplications, litanies in such numbers as the rest of the Saints joined together do not obtain; yea, to the Blessed Virgin alone is paid the worship of hyperdulia, as to God is paid the worship of latria, while to the rest of the Saints is paid the worship of dulia. Thy honour, thy praise and glory, O Blessed Virgin, will live as long as the angels shall live, as long as men shall live, as long as Christ shall live, as long as God shall be God, for ever and ever.

Ver. 49.—*For He that is mighty hath done to me great things.* For the Incarnation of the Word is a greater work than the creation of the whole world; wherefore the Blessed Virgin, as being the Mother of God, is greater than all angels, all men, and all creatures taken together. Augustine (*Serm. 2 de Assump.*) says, "What great things hath He done unto thee, O Lady, that thou shouldest merit to be called blessed? I truly believe that thou, a creature, gavest birth to the Creator; a servant, thou broughtest forth the Lord." "He that is mighty hath done to me wonderful things," says Titus, "since I, still a virgin, have conceived by the will of God, passing over the bounds of nature; I have been accounted worthy, without being joined to a husband, to be made a mother, not of any one, but of the Only Begotten Son of God."

Cardinal Hugo mentions twelve great things belonging to the Virgin:—1. Sanctification in the womb of her mother. 2. The salutation of the angel. 3. The fulness of grace. 4. The conception of her Son. 5. Fruitful virginity. 6. Virgin fruitfulness. 7. Her honoured humility. 8. Her ready obedience. 9. The devotion of her faith. 10. Her prudent modesty. 11. Her modest prudence. 12. The

dominion over heaven. S. Thomas (*part.* 1, *qu.* 25, *art.* 6) teaches that it is possible for God to do better works than He has done with the exception of three: the Incarnation of the Word; the maternity of God; and the beatitude of man which consists in the vision of God; for God can do nothing better or greater than these, because nothing can be greater or better than God Himself. The Blessed Virgin is called by Hesychius, Bishop of Jerusalem (*hom. 2 de S. Maria*), "The entire complement of the Trinity, because both the Holy Ghost came to her, and sojourned with her, and the Father overshadowed her, and the Son, borne in her womb, dwelt within her."

He that is mighty. Vulgate, *potens*; Greek, ὁ δυνατός. This is one of the ten names of God, for the Septuagint used to render the Hebrew word גבר (gibbor), *i.e.* mighty, strong, whence is derived *Gabriel*, *i.e.* the strength of God. The Blessed Virgin, says Titus, adds this—first, that no one may disbelieve this mystery. Let no one wonder if I a virgin have conceived, for He Who hath wrought this work is the Mighty God. Secondly, that she may show that what the angel had promised (verse 35) is fulfilled in her, *the power* (Greek, δύναμις) *of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* She alludes to Isa. vii. 14 and ix. 6, *His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God* אל גבר (Elgibbor), *i.e.* mighty, strong as a giant; whence Gabriel announced His birth, whose name signifies the power and strength of God.

And holy is His name. The Blessed Virgin shows that the promise of the angel, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*, was fulfilled; and therefore she says, *And holy is His Name.*

Toletus and Francis Lucas are of opinion that the Virgin here celebrates two great things as done to her by God—1. The Incarnation of the Word, by which she was made the Mother of God, and therefore the mistress and queen of all angels and men; and, 2. Her own preparation and sanctification for the accomplishment of the Incarnation in her. For as it was a work of power for God to be made man of a virgin, so it was a work of holiness to prepare the Virgin so as to be fit for conceiving in her womb the Holy and

Immaculate Word of God. For the Blessed Virgin was so sanctified by the Holy Ghost that she contracted no sin at all, and far exceeded all the angels, even the seraphim, in grace and holiness.

But more plainly and fully, we may refer both clauses of this verse to both works, namely, to the Incarnation of the Word as well as to her own preparation and sanctification for It. For each of these was a work of the excellent power as well as holiness of God, because each was accomplished by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon her to sanctify both Christ and the Virgin; according to the announcement of the angel, *That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* For Christ was the Holy of Holies, the Fount of holiness, sanctifying the whole world.

The meaning therefore is, God Himself, as signified by His own name, is holy, possesses all purity, holiness, power, perfection, and therefore is to be worshipped, adored, and celebrated in every way. God therefore is holy in all His works, and above all in this most holy mystery of the Incarnation of the Word; by which He sanctified Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and all the faithful.

Lastly, God incarnate is called holy because He assumed flesh and blood for the purpose of offering it to God, both in life, and on the cross, and in His death for the salvation of men. For as S. Isidorus says (*lib.* 15, *Origin. c.* 14), "Nothing was called holy among the ancients unless it was consecrated or sprinkled with the blood of a victim. Also that is holy (*sanctum*) which is ratified (*sancitum*) with blood; moreover to ratify (*sancire*) is to confirm." See Heb. ix. 12, &c. S. Augustine (*lib* 2 *de Serm. Dom.* 31) says, "That is holy which it is impious to violate and defile; and assuredly any one is held guilty of this crime who only attempts or wills it with regard to a holy thing, which nevertheless remains by its nature inviolable and incorruptible." But S. Bernard (*Serm.* 5 *in Vigil. Nativ.*) makes sanctity or holiness consist in clemency and gentleness, according to that saying concerning Moses, Ecclesiasticus xlv. 4, *He that sanctified him in his faithfulness and meekness*; and he continues, "In order that sanctification may be perfect we have need

to learn gentleness and courtesy in social life from the Saint of Saints; as He says Himself, *Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*"

Hence some more recent interpreters refer the words *Holy is His Name*, to the following verse, *and His mercy*, &c., as if this were the holiness of God; but literally they must be referred to what precedes, as I have said. Hence Euthymius (*in Ps.* 11) says, "He properly is called pious (ὅσιος) who observes piety and religion in those things which pertain to God; but he is called holy (ἅγιος) who is made a partaker of the Divine nature by following the path of virtue." Further, holy (*sanctus*) in Hebrew is קדש, that is, removed and separated from all vice, blemish, and even from intercourse with the vulgar; as God is especially, Whose holiness and majesty is so far removed, so lofty and exalted, that it infinitely transcends all gods, angels, and men. Whence S. Dionysius (*de Divin. nom. c.* 12) says, "Since holiness is free from all taint, and is purity altogether perfect and immaculate, hence God, from the superabundance of the purity and all the excellences with which He is filled, is called the Holy of Holies." And Bede says, "His name is called holy because in the height of His marvellous power He transcends every creature, and is widely removed from the works which He has made. This is better understood in the Greek tongue, in which the very word that means holy (ἅγιος) signifies as it were to be apart from earth: and by imitation of Him in our small measure we are taught to separate ourselves from all who are neither holy nor dedicated to God, by those words of the Lord, *Be ye holy, for I am holy;* for whoever has consecrated himself to God will rightly appear as one free from the world; for he is able even himself to say, while we walk upon the earth we have our conversation in heaven."

Christians therefore being called by Christ to fulness of holiness ought to be holy (whence they are continually called by S. Paul holy [or saints]), yea, more holy than all the faithful who lived in the time of Moses, Abraham, &c; for Christianity is nothing else than the life of Christ. Let the Christian therefore so live as it becomes the disciple of Christ, so that his life may be a living

image of the holiness of Christ, so that whoever sees and hears him, may seem to himself to see and hear Christ in him.

Ver. 50.—*And His mercy*, &c. As God is all-powerful and all-holy, so is He all-merciful, and that continually towards all who in any age love Him, and therefore fear to offend Him. This is the second part of this song, in which the Blessed Virgin passes from the peculiar benefits bestowed by God upon herself, to those bestowed in common upon all Israel, *i.e.* upon all the faithful.

Ver. 51.—*He hath shewed strength*, &c. The Virgin has been praising the mercy of God towards those who fear Him, and now she goes on to praise His severity and justice towards those who despise Him.

With His arm. The strength and power of God are anthropomorphically expressed by the hand, the finger, the right hand, but most of all by the arm: for the strength of man puts itself forth in his arms. The meaning therefore is, God has in every age wrought many things by His mighty arm, as in the case of Pharaoh by Moses, &c. But much more has God shown His power by causing Christ to become incarnate in me, by Whom He will mightily overthrow Lucifer, hell, death and sin. Whence Bede and Theophylact understand by His arm here, mystically, the Son of God incarnate in the Virgin. For He is the power of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. There is an allusion to Isa. liii. 1, *To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*

He hath scattered the proud; as He scattered and overthrew Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, &c.

In the imagination of their heart. Vulgate, *mente cordis sui.* Some refer these words to the heart of God, so that the meaning will be, God by His own heart, *i.e.* His will and decree, scattered the proud: so S. Augustine explains it. "In the imagination (or purpose) of His heart," he says, "that is, in His deep counsel He scattered them. It was deep counsel for God to become man for me, and for the innocent to suffer in order that the guilty might be redeemed." The Carthusian (Denis) follows this explanation, "In the purpose, *i.e.* in the intention and will of His heart, *i.e.* of His

understanding, by which He discerns, judges, and orders all things." But from the Greek it is clear that the word *sui* is not to be referred to the heart of God, but to the heart of the proud; for the Greek is αὐτῶν, *of them*. Whence Euthymius says, God scattered those who were proud in their heart.

Others refer the word *sui, of them*, to the word *dispersit, scattered*, so that the meaning is, God hath scattered the proud by means of the purpose (Greek, διανοίᾳ) of their heart, because He turns back their proud machinations to their own destruction, so that He disperses them, according to that saying Job v. 13, *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness;* as He did to Pharaoh when he followed the Hebrews through the Red Sea, by drowning him with all his followers in the same sea; and to the brethren of Joseph who sold him that they might destroy him, but God by this very thing exalted Joseph and constrained his brethren to bow down to him.

Ver. 52.—*He hath put down*, &c. As He put down the proud Saul from his royal throne by putting the humble David in his place; so He put the humble Mordecai in the place of the proud Haman, and Esther in the place of Vashti. God has done, and does, and will do the same in every age. Wherefore these past tenses. He hath scattered, put down, exalted, are to be taken in the widest sense, as signifying any time, future, present, or past, according to the Hebrew idiom. He hath put down therefore signifies He does and will put down. The Virgin alludes to the words of David, Psalm cxiii. 7, *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust*, &c.; and of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 7, *The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich*, &c.

Moreover, as often at other times, so at the time of the Nativity of Christ God put down the mighty from their seat almost throughout the whole world, which, after Julius Cæsar, Pompey, Lepidus, Antony, and other kings, tyrants, and princes had been removed, He had put in subjection to Augustus alone who was a type of Christ, as Cyrus had been, Isa. xlv. 1. Whence, when Christ was born, he refused the title of Lord which was offered

to him. Then also God put down from their seat Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, who were contending with each other for the government over Judæa. Herod also, the infanticide, was deprived of his life and kingdom; and shortly afterwards his whole royal progeny perished; as also did that of Augustus Cæsar, that it might be declared that Christ was now born, and that every kingdom was due to him and was prepared for Him, as Daniel foretold, c. vii. 14.

Ver. 53.—*He hath filled the hungry*, &c. So He fed the Hebrews with manna from heaven for forty years in the wilderness. So He fed Elias when he was hungry by an angel, and Daniel in the den of lions by Habakkuk, and Paul, the first hermit, by a raven. So also He fed the Blessed Virgin, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, with the Word Incarnate, and He feeds all the faithful with the same in the Holy Eucharist, and will feed them still more in heaven. By the hungry the poor are intended, since the Virgin opposes the rich to them.

Ver. 54.—*He hath holpen His servant Israel.* God hath taken by the hand, raised up, helped and restored His people Israel, whom He loved and kept as a son or servant. He did this formerly by Moses, Joshua, David, &c.; and now much more has He done it, by sending to Israel the Messiah that had been promised. For at that time, the commonwealth and Church of Israel had fallen into ruins, since the sceptre had been taken away from them, and transferred to Herod and the Romans; and the priests, intent on their own gain, were negligent of the welfare of the people; wherefore the people were grievously afflicted with various miseries of mind and body. God therefore at a seasonable time sent Christ that He might deliver out of them all His own Israel, that is, all the faithful who were converted to Him, both from among the Jews and Gentiles; whence S. Augustine says, "He helped Israel; not the Israel which He found; but He helped Israel that He might make him; as a physician helps a sick man, that He might heal the weak, and redeem the captive, that He might justify the impious, and save the just." For Israel in

Hebrew is the same *as the man who sees God*, or rather, *one who has power with God*, Gen. xxxii. 28. This is the third part of this song in which the Blessed Virgin passes from the common blessings in old times bestowed by God upon Israel, to the peculiar one of the Messiah already incarnate in herself, which was the greatest and most excellent of all.

In remembrance, &c. The cause why God sent Christ was His compassion on Israel and the whole human race, doomed to death and hell on account of their sins. Whence S. Leo says, "The cause of our restoration is none else than the compassion of God." God is said to have remembered, because He seemed to have left men in their miseries for four thousand years and to have forgotten His promise made to the Fathers; now as it were having remembered it, He fulfilled it in Christ; for this compassion is none other than the salvation brought by Christ.

Ver. 55.—*As he spake to our fathers*, &c. The Virgin declares that this mercy, viz. the salvation brought by Christ, had been promised by God from ancient times to the fathers, Adam, Abraham, &c.; so that the Incarnation of Christ was not a fortuitous event, but from eternity had been provided and decreed by God for the salvation of Israel and of the whole world, and had been promised in time to all the Patriarchs from the beginning of the world; who themselves eagerly desired the same, and though they besought God for it with ardent longings, yet they did not obtain it, because God had decreed to reserve this great gift for this time and age.

To Abraham and his seed. These words are to be referred to the words *in remembrance of His mercy*, not to the words *as He spake to our fathers*, which are to be enclosed in a parenthesis. God by making Christ to be incarnate remembered His mercy formerly promised by Him to Abraham and his seed, that is, to the Israelites his descendants. For Christ was especially promised to them, but inasmuch as they rejected Him, God turned His mercy aside from them to the Gentiles who gladly received Him. He remembered Abraham both because he was the first Patriarch of Israel, and also

because he excelled in faith and was therefore called by God the father of the faithful, and received the promise concerning Christ Who should be born of his seed.

Wherefore this seed, *i.e.* the children and posterity of Abraham, is not to be understood carnally of the Jews descended from him according to the flesh, but spiritually of the faithful believers in Christ both Jews and Gentiles, for these follow the example of the faith of Abraham the father of the faithful.

For ever. This word may be referred either to the word *seed*, so that the meaning is, the seed of Abraham will last for ever, or to the word *mercy*. God hath remembered His mercy, that is the salvation to be given through Christ; and it was His will that it should endure not for a hundred or a thousand years only, but for all eternity. Either sense comes to the same.

Ver. 56.—*And Mary abode with her about three months*, &c. She ministered to Elizabeth her kinswoman, refreshing her with her holy ministrations and conversation, and sanctifying her, and John likewise. So S. Ambrose says, "It was not only for the sake of friendship that she abode so long, but for the advancement also of so great a prophet; for if at her first coming the child had advanced so far that at the salutation of Mary he leaped in the womb, and his mother was filled with the Holy Spirit, how much may we suppose that the presence of the holy Mary added during so long a time?" So also Origen (*Hom.* 9) shows that during these three months, owing to the presence of the Virgin both John and Elizabeth made wonderful progress in holiness.

There is a question here whether the Blessed Virgin remained until the nativity of John. Theophylact, Euthymius, Jansenius maintain that she did not

They prove this—1. because the Blessed Virgin came in the sixth month, and remained, as it were, three months (Vulg. *quasi tres menses*), therefore she departed before the ninth month was completed, and therefore before Elizabeth gave birth to the child; 2. because after the departure of the Virgin, S. Luke relates the birth of the child, without making any mention of the Virgin; 3. and chiefly,

because it was not fitting that the Virgin should be present at the birth; 4. because it was proper that she should avoid the crowd which would gather together at the birth.

The contrary opinion is equally, and even more, probable; and is maintained by Origen, S. Ambrose, &c.—1. because it would have been discourteous to remain up to the birth and leave immediately before it; 2. because at the time of the birth Elizabeth most needed the presence, help, and consolation of the Virgin; 3. because the Virgin remained three months for this very purpose, that she might behold, embrace, and bless John, the wonder of the world, and the forerunner of Christ, and on the other hand that John when born might behold and venerate the mother of the Lord, and Christ the Lord in her. Whence Bede says, "Mary remained until, Elizabeth's full time having come, she saw the nativity of the forerunner of her Lord, on account of whom chiefly she had come."

And she returned to her own house. To Nazareth. This house of the Virgin was translated by angels to Loretto, as I have said before.

Ver. 57.—*And Elizabeth's full time came*, &c. S. Luke adds the account of Elizabeth's bringing forth to that of the visitation of the Blessed Virgin, as an effect to a cause. For the Blessed Virgin by her prayers and merits obtained for John both his nativity and his sanctification; for for this purpose she had come from Nazareth and had remained with her for three months.

And she brought forth a son. John the Baptist on June 24th; for then the Church keeps the yearly celebration of his birth, observing it in his case alone, as it does also in the case of Christ. For as regards the rest of the Saints the Church celebrates not the day of their birth, but that of their death on which they passed from a life of misery to one of blessedness.

Ver. 58.—*And her neighbours*, &c. So was fulfilled the promise of the Angel (v. 14), *Many shall rejoice at his birth.* Truly as S. Ambrose says, "The bringing forth of the Saints causes the rejoicing of many, for it is a common blessing; for justice is a public virtue."

For the just by their example benefit all; many also, as John did, benefit them by their preaching.

Ver. 59.—*They came.* That is, the priests and relations whose office it was to perform the rite of circumcision.

To circumcise. Notice here that the Jews were not always circumcised in the synagogue. For that John was circumcised at home is inferred from the following verse, in which it is clearly implied that his mother was present, who could not at that time according to the law (Lev. xii. 4) leave the house.

Also by circumcision an infant was purged from original sin, and united to the church, or company of the faithful, whence at that time the name of some faithful person, especially of the father, grandfather, or some relation was given to the infant, as is now done in baptism.

Ver. 60.—*And his mother*, &c. Elizabeth, who on the salutation of the Virgin, being filled with the Holy Ghost, had learned the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, learned also the name of her son not from Zacharias but from the Holy Spirit, and all the other things that had happened to Zacharias in the temple when he was burning incense. For as S. Ambrose says, "She could not be ignorant of the Forerunner of the Lord who had prophesied of Christ."

Ver. 61.—*And they said, There is none of thy kindred*, &c. This is an earthly custom; but John was a citizen of heaven, not of the earth; whence he received from heaven a celestial name. "Observe," as S. Ambrose and Bede say, "that the name belongs not to the family but to the prophet."

Ver. 62.—*They made signs*, &c. Lest perchance the mother had made a mistake in assigning the name, they refer to the father, to whom both the infant and the giving of a name to the infant belonged. *They made signs;* "because," says S. Ambrose, "his unbelief had deprived him of speech and hearing, they question him by signs."

Ver. 63.—*His name is John.* S. Ambrose remarks that it is said his name *is*, not *will be;* so that the meaning is, we do not give a name to him who has received one from God, "he has his own name,

which we acknowledge, but which we did not choose." Names were frequently given from some event either present or future; thus Isaac received his name from the laughter of his mother; Cain because he was the possession of his mother Eve; Moses because he was drawn out of the water, &c.; so also John received his name from the grace and mercy which he received, not in his conception, but when he was visited by the Blessed Virgin.

And they all wondered, both at the agreement between the father and mother, and at the name, which was an unknown one in the family; for they did not know that it had been revealed from heaven to Zacharias.

Ver. 64.—*And his mouth*, &c. That is, he began to speak. S. Ambrose says, "Rightly from that moment was his tongue loosed, for that which unbelief had bound faith set free." When he saw John really born, he believed the promise made to him by the angel concerning him. John therefore, as he had filled his mother when in her womb with the Holy Spirit, so now when born breathed the same spirit upon his father. Whence S. Gregory Nazianzen says, "The birth of John broke the silence of Zacharias; for it were unreasonable, when the voice of the Word had come forth, that the father should remain speechless."

Moreover, Theophylact says, "All these things were done œconomically, that John might be esteemed a witness of Christ worthy of credit;" and Bede, "The future prophet is commended by previous auspices."

Symbolically, S. Ambrose says, "Because John was a voice (according to the words, *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness*), therefore at his birth his father, who had been dumb, recovered his voice."

Ver. 65.—*And fear came on all that dwelt*, &c. That is, a religious fear and reverence towards God Who had done so many wonderful works concerning John both as to his father and mother. For where God displays his power there arises on the part of men towards Him and His majesty a sacred feeling of fear and reverence.

Ver. 66.—*What manner of child shall this be*, &c. God did this in order that by means of these signs He might stir up the minds of all men to the veneration of John as the future forerunner and discloser of Christ, and in order that He might procure authority for him; and that so his testimony concerning Christ might outweigh every objection. Christ revealed to S. Bridget (*Lib. Revel. cap.* 108) that there were three saints who had pleased Him above all others, viz., the Blessed Virgin, Mary Magdalen, and John the Baptist, and that the demons, being struck with terror at his birth, bewailed and lamented when the angels and pious Israelites rejoiced.

And the hand of the Lord was with him. The hand, that is the wonderful power, providence, care, grace, and favour of God (for of all these the hand is the symbol) displayed themselves in this boy, so that it might be seen that he was singularly formed, chosen, and destined for great things. And God showed this—1. by announcing his nativity by an angel to his father Zacharias; 2. by unloosing the tongue and the ears of Zacharias at his birth, so that he might speak the praises of God; 3. by illuminating and impelling him to prophesy concerning the boy; 4. by giving to Elizabeth when old and barren this offspring by a miracle; 5. by giving to the boy a new and unusual name. All which things, being for the most part miracles, portended that John would be a great man and a prophet, and that God would accomplish great things by him; and all who saw or heard these things were filled with great fear, joy, and hope.

S. Ambrose, Origen, and Euthymius add that John himself felt that the hand of God was upon him; since he felt every day that by the operation of God he grew and advanced in the use of reason, in holy inspirations and desires, in the love and worship of Christ, in grace and in merits beyond what was natural to his years.

Ver. 67.—*And his father Zacharias was filled*, &c. Zacharias already had the Holy Spirit, for he was a just man (as we read in verse 6); yet he by the birth of John received so great a fulness

of the grace of the Holy Spirit, both sanctifying and rendering him acceptable, and also gratuitously given, *i.e.* of the spirit of prophecy, and he was filled with so great a love for Christ, already incarnate in the womb of the Virgin, that he broke forth into this prophetic song which the Church sings daily in the Divine Office at Lauds.

Ver. 68.—*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.* Zacharias in this song does two things. 1. He praises God for the Messiah incarnate in the Virgin. 2. From verse 76 to the end he praises God by addressing his son John, and celebrates his office as the forerunner of Christ.

The God of Israel. For although He is the God of all men, yet He is especially the God of Israel, *i.e.* of His faithful people, whether they were Jews and Israelites as formerly, or Christians as in these days.

Hath redeemed, &c. God by means of Christ already incarnate had begun the work of the redemption and deliverance of the whole world from the yoke of slavery to the devil, sin, death, and hell, under which it had been held for four thousand years, but especially the redemption of Israel, *i.e.* of the Jewish people, to whom especially the Messiah had been promised. Zacharias by the spirit of prophecy knew of the incarnation of the Messiah in the womb of the Virgin, and therefore that the redemption of the world was already begun, inasmuch as the Redeemer was conceived Who after a few years was about to complete the redemption of the world by His death on the Cross.

And hath raised up an horn of salvation. In Scripture *horn* signifies strength, power, victory, glory, and consequently a kingdom; for all the glory and strength of horned animals consists in their horns, as S. Chrysostom says. Hence S. Cornelius, pontiff and martyr, is represented in painting with a horn, and received his name from it because with the strength of an horn he resisted the Emperor Decius, and triumphed gloriously over him by martyrdom. See what I have said on Hab. iii. 4, Dan. viii. 4, and Deut. xxxiii. 17.

The meaning, therefore, is that God has again raised up the horn, *i.e.* the excellent power and glory of the kingdom of Israel by Christ the Son of David, which horn had flourished in the times of Joshua, and David, and Solomon, but had now fallen; and this horn was not temporal but spiritual, as I have said on verse 32. There is an allusion to Ezek. xxix. 21, *In that day the horn of the house of Israel shall bud forth.* It is clear, therefore, that the horn of salvation is Jesus Christ Himself the Saviour, and his power, victory, and kingdom; according to that saying of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 10, *The Lord shall give strength unto His king and exalt the horn of His anointed.* Tropologically, Bede says, "The horn stretches beyond the flesh, and so the kingdom of Christ reaches beyond the world and the joys of the flesh; according to which figure David and Solomon were consecrated kings by the horn of oil." And Origen explains Isa. v. 1, *a vineyard hath been planted in a horn* (Vulgate, *vinea facta est in cornu*), as meaning the Church has been planted in Christ.

Ver. 70.—*By the mouth of His holy prophets.* All the prophets prophesied of Christ, *e.g.* Isa. xix. 20; Jerem. xxx. 10; Ezek. xiii. 21.

Ver. 71.—*That we should be saved from our enemies.* As God spake by the prophets, and promised salvation, *i.e.* the deliverance and salvation of Israel and the whole world from captivity to the devil, sin, death, and hell, so now hath He accomplished the same, by giving a horn of salvation, *i.e.* a strong Saviour, Jesus Christ. Observe that Zacharias here interprets the ancient prophecies of the kingdom and salvation of Christ, not in a temporal but in a spiritual sense, as is clear from verse 73 and the following.

Ver. 72.—*To perform the mercy.* As God promised Christ to our fathers, so now has He fulfilled His promises, and has shown Christ to their posterity, by Whom He will deliver also the fathers from limbus, and bless them, and bring them into heaven with Himself. Whence Theophylact says, "The grace of Christ reaches even to those who were dead; for through him all will rise again: He also fulfilled the hope of the fathers;" for as Theophlact says again,

"When the fathers see their sons enjoying such blessings, they rejoice and are partakers of their joy, in the same way as if the blessings had been bestowed upon themselves."

His Holy Covenant.—This covenant was made by God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Gen. xii. 3, and xxvi. 4, and xxviii. 14; and it is this, *in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* Jeremiah explains this blessing, ch. xxxi. 31.

Ver. 73.—*The oath.* This may be referred—1. To the word *remember.* So Euthymus takes it. 2. It may be referred to the word *mercy.* 3. It may, more properly, be referred to the word *covenant;* so that the meaning is, God hath sent Christ, that He might show Himself mindful of the covenant, by which He promised Him to the fathers; which covenant is that great oath which He sware to Abraham.

Or 4, you may refer the word *oath* more plainly and easily to the word *perform* in the preceding verse; so that three reasons may be signified here on account of which God has raised up this horn of salvation—1. that He might perform His mercy; 2. that He might remember his covenant; 3. that He might fulfil His own oath by which He swore to Abraham that He would multiply his spiritual seed, rather than his seed according to the flesh, as the stars of heaven, and that in his seed He would bless all nations. Gen. xxii. 16, and Heb. vi. 13, 14. The Hebrews often leave words to be understood from those which precede or follow: so here the word *oath* is used for the *performance and fulfilment of the oath*. for these words were spoken by Zacharias when he was exulting, and, as it were, absorbed in joy; so that he has regard to and pours forth not so much words as things; whence in his words he often falls into solecisms and other defects.

Ver. 74.—*That we being delivered*, &c. He explains the oath of God, *i.e.* the blessing which He promised to Abraham, and confirmed with an oath, and shows that it consists in the salvation which Christ brought, that being set free by His grace from our enemies, viz., from sin, the devil, and hell, to which we had been as it were enslaved, we may now serve God in holiness. This

service is latria which is the worship due to God alone; for in the Greek it is λατρεύειν.

Ver. 75.—*In holiness and righteousness.* This is the oath, or blessing of God sworn to Abraham, viz. the salvation and grace of Christ and of His Gospel, the excellence and perfection of which He beautifully describes in these words. For the first part of which it consists is liberty, that is deliverance from the slavery of sin and the devil. The second is service, that is the worship of the true and most high God. The third is love, not slavish fear; for the Jews served God through fear of punishment, but Christians serve Him like sons with a free love, Rom. viii. 15. The fourth part is inward and true holiness and righteousness, not outward and placed in washings, sacrifices, and other ceremonies like the righteousness which the Jews had. The fifth part is expressed in the words *before God*, so that we, considering that we are always before the eyes of God, Who beholds the hearts of every one, may strive to show forth before Him a pure and holy heart, and to perform all our works out of such, knowing that God looks into us and beholds the very bottom of our heart, and according to it will judge our works. The sixth part is, that we should perform these things, not on one day, month, or year, but all our days by persevering in them even unto death.

Holiness has respect to God, and consists in the holy worship of God. *Righteousness* has respect to our neighbour, and consequently to oneself. Holiness, therefore, gives to God what is His due, Righteousness to men what is their due, so that each should give to each what is owing to him either from justice or charity, and consequently that a man should give to himself temperance, modesty and humility, by which he may conform himself aright to the rule of the law and of virtue, for this is what he ought to render to himself. By holiness and righteousness, therefore, every observance of virtue is signified that is prescribed in the decalogue; for holiness has respect to the precepts of the first table which pertain to God, righteousness to those of the second, which concern our neighbour and our self. These therefore are the duties of the evangelical life to which Christ

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calls us. This, therefore, is the vocation of the faithful, namely, *that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present life, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*, Tit. ii. 12, 13, so that we should imitate the holiness of God and of Christ, and Christ should seem to live, act, and speak in us; *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14, according to that saying of S. Paul, *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*, Gal. ii. 20. Let each, therefore, contemplate the life and character of Christ, and in them let him behold as in a mirror his own, and he will see whether he is a true Christian or only a false painted one.

Ver. 76.—*And thou, child.* And thou John, though thou art only now eight days old, yet when thou art twenty-nine years old, thou wilt be a Prophet announcing and pointing out the Christ. This is the second part of the song in which Zacharias passes from Christ to his son, and foretells that he will be the Prophet and Forerunner of Christ. S. Ambrose, Origen, Theophylact, and Titus say that the infant, inasmuch as he had been gifted with the use of reason in the womb of his mother, understood these words in which his father addressed him. Ambrose says, "He could hear the voice of his father who before he was born heard the salutation of Mary. He surely knew that there were certain organs of hearing in a prophet, which were unclosed by the Spirit of God, not by the growth of the body." Bede adds, "Unless perhaps Zacharias is to be supposed to have wished, as soon as he was able to speak, to declare rather for their instruction who were present, the future gifts of his son, which he had learnt long before from the angel."

For thou shalt go before. As for kings when approaching, the roads are wont to be prepared, levelled and advanced, by removing stones, filth, and other impediments or eyesores, so thou, my son, wilt prepare a way for Christ the King, by removing whatever might be an offence to Him in the minds of the Jews, by exhorting them, by word and example, to repent and to receive Jesus as

the true Messiah sent by God, and to believe and obey Him, and so obtain from Him salvation and forgiveness of sins and the grace of God.

Ver. 77.—*To give knowledge of salvation*, &c. That the Jews may know that they ought to hope and seek for salvation from Christ the Saviour *in*, i.e. *for*, the remission of sins, so that they may obtain it from Christ through faith in Him and baptism, for in this consists the salvation of Christ; for sins are not remitted except through the salvation and grace of Christ. Whence Bede says, "As if desiring to explain the name of Jesus, he frequently makes mention of salvation; but lest you should think it was a temporal and carnal salvation which was promised, he says, *for the forgiveness of their sins.*"

Ver. 78.—*Through the tender mercy*, &c. Vulg., *Viscera misericordiæ; bowels of mercy:* this expression signifies the most inward and greatest mercy of God.

The Dayspring. Observe—1. That this Dayspring (Vulg., *oriens*) is in the Greek ἀνατολή, i.e. *rising*, as of the sun, or *shooting up* as of a branch. The word is used especially of Christ; whence the Chaldean version renders it in Zechariah iii. 8 and vi. 12 by Messiah, *i.e.* Christ.

2. That Zechariah here alludes (1.) to the passage Mal. iv. 2. *To you that fear my name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise* (*orietur*) *with healing in His wings*; and to Wisd. v. 6, and to Isaiah lx. 1, and Num. xxiv. 17, *There shall arise a star out of Jacob and a sceptre* (Vulg., *virga, a rod*) *shall spring forth out of Israel*, viz. Christ, Who as a star or a sun will illuminate us, and will make us glad with all grace, and as a leader and sun will go before us on the way to heaven. (2.) Zacharias refers to Zech. iii. 8, *Behold I will send forth my servant the Branch:* Vulg., *orientem*, Greek ἀνατολήν; and to Zech. vi. 12, *Behold the man whose name is the Branch;* and to Isaiah iv. 2, *In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious:* where the Septuag. translates, *In that day God shall shine forth in counsel with glory;* and Jerem. xxiii. 5, *I will raise unto David a righteous Branch.* In Zech. iii. and vi., the Septuag.

renders Branch (*oriens*) by ἀνατολή, and S. Luke has taken the word (which is not found anywhere else) from those passages.

Observe, 3. That in Zech. iii. and iv., for ἀνατολή the Hebrew is צמח, which properly signifies a shoot, as S. Jerome teaches: whence the Sept. elsewhere renders it by βλάστημα; but the word is used to signify many other things by metaphor. This is clear from Ezek. xxix. 21, &c.; and also from the Septuag., which renders the word in Zech. iii. and vi. (as I have said before) by ἀνατολή, which, although it may be used generally of any springing up, even of herbs (according to Suidas), yet is properly used of the rising of the sun, moon, and stars.

I say therefore that Christ is called a Branch, but a Branch from the sun, *i.e.* a heavenly and divine Branch. This is clear (1.) because the word ἀνατολή properly has this meaning. (2.) Because of what follows, the Branch (or Day Spring) *from on high*, i.e. from God and heaven: and *shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death;* all which expressions clearly refer, not to the shooting forth of an earthly branch, but of the sun or a star. So Theophilus, Euthymius, &c.

Observe, that Christ is called both a heavenly and an earthly Branch: for Christ has two generations; a divine, by virtue of which He is the offspring of the Father; and a human, by virtue of which He is the offspring of His mother and of David. Thus He is spoken of by Isaiah, Zechariah, and others as a Branch, (1.) because He will shoot forth as a new Branch from the root of Jesse or David which seemed to have dried up; a Branch I say, at first, shooting forth in heaven, and then transplanted on to the earth. (2.) By the word Branch is signified the littleness and lowliness of Christ at His birth, which afterwards increased to so great a size that the whole world was embraced by its shadow, according to the parable of the grain of mustard seed. (3.) Christ is signified (by the same expression Branch or Dayspring) as a second Melchisedec, *without father* as man; *i.e.* as a shoot springing up from the earth alone, signifying that He was born of a virgin mother: but as God, *without mother*, because he was generated from the Father, like a beam from the sun.

Observe also, that to Christ are rightly attributed three qualities which belong both to the sun, and to a branch, because (1.) He arose in heaven with splendour and glory, and then shooting forth from heaven He sprang up on earth. For Christ is the Tree of Life transplanted to earth from the celestial paradise by the Incarnation, and thence again ascending to heaven and paradise, by the vision and fruition of Himself He bestows upon His Saints an eternity of the highest glory. S. Jerome on Zech. vi. 12, explaining the passage mystically, says, "He who is called Jesus because He saved the world, is also called the Dayspring (*oriens*) because in His day righteousness arose: and He is celebrated in the words of the Psalm, *Truth shall flourish out of the earth*, because being sprung from the womb of a virgin in the consummation of the ages, He said *I am the Truth*." And again, "He who is crowned with our virtues will arise and will be called the Dayspring; to Whom the Father said, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee;* according to that saying of Isaiah (xi. 1), *Then shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a blossom shall grow up from his root.*"

But other Fathers rightly interpret the word *oriens* as signifying the sun rising from on high, namely heaven, by which they understand Christ Who is the Light of the world, and therefore was born on the earth, that by means of the flesh He might be as it were a transparent sun illuminating every man that comes to Him. So Bede, &c., and S. Gregory (*Lib.* 20 *in Job*, *cap.* 18), who says, "Because the light rises from the east, He is rightly called the Dayspring, by the light of Whose righteousness the night of our iniquity is illuminated."

In both ways, therefore, ought the word *oriens* to be understood here, as alluding both to the springing up of a shoot and to the rising of the sun: for Christ is a heavenly shoot, and He is likewise a sun shooting forth and springing from a Virgin on the earth, as I have already said.

Ver. 79.—*To give light*, &c. Greek ἐπιφᾶναι, or with a different accent ἐπίφαναι. If we read ἐπίφαναι it will be the imperative

mood, so that the meaning will be, Arise, shine, O my son, like some new sun of the world (for Zacharias is addressing John), so that through faith in Christ thou mayest illuminate sinners who are sitting in the darkness of errors and sins, and restore them to the light of truth, righteousness, and salvation, and deliver them from the tyranny of the devil.

2. It is better to take ἐπιφᾶναι as an infinitive; so that the meaning will be, Christ has visited us like a sun from on high, to bring the light of true doctrine, grace, righteousness, and joy both to the fathers who were dead, and to sinners who are alive, who both were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. For literally the fathers were sitting in the dark limbus of Hades, as it were in the shadow of death. And mystically, sinners were sitting in darkness, *i.e.* in dark errors, vices, and sins. S. Chrysostom and others by darkness understand errors, by the shadow of death sins; it is better, though, to take each expression as applying to both; so that darkness means common errors and faults, and the shadow of death serious errors and wickedness.

To guide our feet into the way of peace. That is, that Christ by the light of His faith and grace may direct us into the way of righteousness; for this is the way of peace; for righteousness is the way and means to attain peace and tranquillity of mind; both peace with God and men in this life, and beatific peace in heaven; according to Isaiah xxxii. 17. *And the work of righteousness shall be peace, . . . and my people shall dwell in the beauty of peace, and in sure dwellings;* for by peace the Hebrews signify every blessing, and eternal felicity and beatitude itself. Hence Christ is called by Isaiah (ix. 6), *The Prince of peace and the Father of the coming age;* and he adds, *of peace there shall be no end.*

Ver. 80.—*And the child grew*, &c. As John grew in body, so also he waxed strong in spirit, because the Holy Spirit from day to day filled him with greater wisdom, grace, and strength. Hence we conclude that the use of reason, which was bestowed upon John in the womb, continued after his nativity and increased. So Theophylact says, "The more the child grew, the more the powers of the

Spirit were manifested in him, being an organ capable of receiving them." And Titus says, "according to the proportion and increase of his age, he advanced in grace and spirit." The same is said of the child Jesus, but after a different manner and sense.

And was in the deserts. Hence we conclude that John from a boy retired into the desert, and there remained till his thirtieth year, when he began to show himself to the people, and to preach repentance to them, and faith in Christ.

Baronius is of opinion that this retirement and flight of John into the desert took place through fear of the infanticide Herod; for although John was not living in the coasts of Bethlehem, yet on account of the fame of his wonderful nativity the fear and anger of Herod extended to him; for fearing that he was the king of the Jews, *i.e.* the Messiah, whom the Magi were asking for, he commanded him to be killed. Wherefore, that he might not be murdered by Herod, he was taken away by his mother when two years old into the desert; and was hidden there in a cave. Cedrenus adds, that his mother died after forty days in the same cave, and that an angel undertook the charge of bringing up John. Peter Alexandrinus adds, that Herod commanded his father Zacharias to be killed between the temple and the altar, because he had removed his son out of the way.

The cause, therefore, of the retirement of John into the desert was the fear of Herod; but there were besides other and greater causes both on the part of God and John. The first was that in the desert he might avoid the occasions of sinning which are supplied by associating with men. The second was that he might freely reprehend the vices of the Jews without fear of any one, inasmuch as he knew no one, but like an angel come down from heaven, preached heavenly truths. Theophylact says, "He departed that he might be brought up beyond the reach of the malice of the multitude, and might not be afraid of censuring any one. The third cause was, that as a future preacher of repentance he might himself first give a pattern of it by living severely in the desert; for austerity of life gives great power to a preacher. The

fourth was that by conversing continually with God and the angels, he might lead an angelic life; according to the words, *Behold, I send My angel, and he shall prepare the way before Me*, Mal. iii. 1. For John, living apart from the world in the desert, had time for fasting, prayer, and contemplation; "that," as Origen says, "he might have leisure for prayer, and might hold converse with the angels, and call upon God, and hear Him answering and saying, 'Behold, here I am.'" The fifth was that he might be a witness to Christ above all exception; for in the desert he could have been taught by no man, but only by God and the angels. Wherefore he was taught of God θεοδίδακτος. John therefore in the desert was an inhabitant of heaven, both because he had the heaven for a home and a roof, and because by continually contemplating heaven, he in mind dwelt in heaven, and emulated the life of those who dwell in heaven.

Gregory Nazianzen (*in orat.* 20 *in praise of S. Basil*) calls John the highest Philosopher; "Basil," he says, "retired hence with us to Pontus, and ruled over the schools of piety which were in those parts, and with Elias and John, the greatest philosophers, embraces solitude." Elias of Crete, commenting on orat. 1 of S. Gregory, gives another reason for the solitary life of John; "Since Christ and John were relations, therefore lest John might seem to bear witness to Christ because of his relationship to Him, it was brought about by the grace of the Holy Spirit that he should lead a solitary life during the whole period of his early years, that he might not seem to give this testimony (to Christ) through friendship or through some kind of artifice, but that he might announce the very fact as if he had learnt it from God; and therefore he said: I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, 'Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending like a dove, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.'"

Symbolically, Nicetas (*in orat.* 38 *on S. Greg. Nazianzen*), says, "John is a figure of those who are sanctified from childhood, and by going onwards to the end preserve a most pious and constant

habit of virtue. For when as yet he was in his mother's womb, he recognised his Lord, and leapt with great joy."

Lastly, the same S. Gregory Nazianzen, following the example of S. John, retired with S. Basil into solitude, the spiritual delights and fruits of which he thus describes (*orat.* 1):—"Nothing seemed to me so much to be desired by any one as that a man should lead a life superior to those things which we behold with our bodily eyes, with closed senses placed where he is free from the desires of the flesh and the world, and, except as far as necessity requires, coming into contact with no human things, and holding converse with himself and with God. Such a man ever bears about in himself visions of Divine purity, unmingled with any earthly and delusive forms; and he is altogether a pure mirror of the things of God and of Divine things, and receives light by means of light (that is to say, a clearer light by means of that which is less clear), and already in hope beholds the blessedness of the future life, and holds converse with the angels, and though still on earth he leaves earth behind, and is placed on high by the Spirit." Wherefore the Fathers speak everywhere of John as a prince of the monastic life, of which Christ was the Leader; as I have shewn, S. Matt. iv. 1.

CHAPTER II.

1 *Augustus taxeth all the Roman empire.* 6 *The nativity of Christ:* 8 *one angel relateth it to the shepherds:* 13 *many sing praises to God for it.* 21 *Christ is circumcised:* 22 *Mary purified.* 28 *Simeon and Anna prophesy of Christ:* 40 *who increaseth in wisdom,* 46 *questioneth in the temple with the doctors,* 51 *and is obedient to his parents.*

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (*And* this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it.*

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Ver. 1.—*And it came to pass in those days* (in which John the Baptist was born) *there went forth a decree*, &c. The Syriac for "all the world," has "all the people of his dominion," subject, that is, to Augustus and the Romans. For we have the authority of Suetonius that Augustus did not rule over the Goths, the Armenians, or the Indians. This enrolment was made, both that the number of men under the sway of Augustus might be known, and also with a view to collecting the tribute to be taken to the Roman treasury, exhausted by so many wars; for each person gave in an account of his income. It is probable that the Jews gave what they otherwise gave in taxes according to their law, half a shekel apiece, that is two reals. Exod. xxx. 11–16; Matt. xxii. 19.

From Cæsar. The true name of this Cæsar was Octavius or Octavian, the sister's son of Julius. He being the first Monarch of Rome, extended the glory of the empire and added to it in a wonderful degree; hence he received the surname of Augustus in the eighteenth year of his reign (from which date Censorinus reckons the years of Augustus, and calls them the Augustian or Augustæan years) as though he were some divinity come down from heaven. For he reigned in the greatest peace, plenty, splendour, and felicity for fifty-seven years. Hence the proverb, "Happier than Augustus, better than Trajan." This census was taken by Augustus when he had

the whole world in a state of peace, and had therefore closed the temple of Janus for the third time, in the fortieth year of his reign. And all this happened under the guidance of God, that He might signify that Christ was now born, who was to bring peace to all the world. So Bede, "A lover of peace, He would be born in a time of the most profound quiet. And there could be no plainer indication of peace than that a census should be taken of the whole world, whose master Augustus was, having reigned at the time of Christ's nativity for some twelve years in the greatest peace, war being lulled to sleep throughout all the world." Wherefore the Virgin Mother of God appeared to Augustus in the Capitol bearing the Infant in her arms, Augustus himself having already learned from the Oracle of Apollo that a Hebrew child was born who had imposed silence upon the Oracles of Idols, and having erected an altar in the Capitol with the title, "The Altar of the Firstborn of God." Hence Constantine the Great built on that spot a temple to the memory of Mary, Mother of God, which exists to this day, and is commonly called the "Ara Cœli." There too the place is shown where Augustus saw the vision. So Baronius, following Suidas, Nicephorus, and others, in the materials of his "Annals." Moreover, in the same reign there flowed out of the earth, in the shop of a certain deserving man, at Rome, a plentiful fountain of oil, which lasted the whole day; and the spot is still shown in the Church of St. Maria in Trastevere. "By this sign," says Osorius, book vi. ch. 20, "what more plainly declared than the birth of Christ in the reign of Cæsar Augustus?" "For 'Christ' being interpreted is 'The Anointed'"—because He hath anointed us, and doth anoint us with the oil of grace and of gladness through all the days of our mortal life. The question arises, In what year of Augustus was Christ born? The opinions of the learned and of chronologists differ on this point. The first opinion is that Christ was born in the 41st Julian year, the 40th of the reign of Augustus, the 36th of Herod, that is, A.U.C. 749, the fourth year of Olympiad 193. The Julian years date from that in which Julius Cæsar reformed the calendar, the last year but one of his life. This opinion agrees

very well with Sacred and Profane histories. The only objection to it is that in S. Luke iii. 1 and 23. It is said of Christ that when He was baptized He "was beginning to be about thirty years old," while according to this view He must have been thirty-two, or nearly as much, for Augustus reigned fifty-seven years. The answer given to this is that Christ is called *about* thirty years, because He was thirty-two. In the same way S. Augustine is said in the old Breviaries to have been baptized in his thirtieth year, when he really was thirty-three, as the lately corrected Breviaries have it.

The second opinion is that Christ was born in the 41st year of Augustus, A.U.C. 750. So think Sulpicius Severus and S. Jerome; Irenæus and Tertullian also are inclined to this opinion.

The third places the date in the 42nd year of Augustus, A.U.C. 751. So Clement of Alexandria and Cassiodonus among the ancients, Scaliger and the Martyrologium Romanum for the 25th December among the moderns. I have accordingly taken this date in the Chronological Chart which I have prefixed to the Pentateuch.

The fourth is the 43d of Augustus, A.U.C. 752. So S. Epiphanius, Eusebius, Nicephorus, and others. Francis Suarez, Maldonatus, and others incline to this opinion.

The fifth makes it the 44th of Augustus, A.U.C. 753. So Joannes Lucidus, and Dionysius Exiguus with their followers.

The sixth is the 45th of Augustus, A.U.C. 754. So Paul of Middlesburgh, Bishop of Sempronia, Peter of Aliacum, Bellarmine, and Bede; and very recently, but with great exactitude, our own Petavius, in the "Rationarium Temporum."

All these opinions have their probabilities and also their difficulties. In a matter of so much doubt there can be no certainty of definition. With the first the early Annals in Epiphanius expressly agree, the old Chronicle in Eusebius, and an anonymous chronologist writing 1400 years ago. In its favour there is also, first, that in that year the temple of Janus was shut, and there was the greatest peace in the world, as I have said. Secondly, that Herod in the 37th year

of his reign (the 41st of Augustus), and a little before his death, ordered the children under two years to be slain, Matt. ii. Christ must, therefore, have then been in His second year. This argument is strong, and can scarcely be solved except by torturing the expression "a bimatu" [Greek ἀπὸ διετοῦς]. Thirdly, Christ must have been born in a leap year, as is clear if we count back from the present to the birth of Christ, for every hundredth year is a leap year. But the 40th year of Augustus was a leap year, and the 41st and 42d were not. For the first year of the Julian Era was a leap year, as Macrobius, Censorinus and others tell us, and therefore the tenth leap year of the Era must have been the year 41—or the 40th year of Augustus. Besides which, it is clear from Josephus, Dion, Hegesippus, and others, that Herod ruled altogether thirty-seven years, and died in the year 43 of the Julian Era, *before the Passover*. Therefore Christ could not have been born under him in that or any following year in the *end of the year*—namely, in December.

Lastly, this was the year in which Augustus introduced to the Forum, with great pomp, his grandson Caius Cæsar,—the son of his daughter Julia and his son-in-law Marcus Agrippa—he, on that occasion, laying aside the "toga prætexta," and putting on the "virilis"—according to the Roman custom. For Caius was born A.U.C. 734, in the consulship of M. Apuleius and P. Silius—as Lipsius shows from Dio, from the stone of Ancyra, and from other documents. Therefore A.U.C. 749 must have been that in which he assumed the "toga virilis"—he then entering on his sixteenth year.

In this same year it was that God the Father introduced to the world His Son Jesus Christ, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, that through Him He might adopt as sons all that believed in Him, and make them heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

From this view likewise we may easily understand why Christ did not come to Jerusalem before the twelfth year of His age; namely, because Archelaus, the son of Herod, reigned there until that year, and he, like his father, was a source of danger to Christ. Archelaus reigned ten years, add to these the two last years of Herod and

we have the twelve years, after which Archelaus was driven into exile, and then Christ freely and without fear went to the Temple at Jerusalem.

Ver. 2.—*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.* *First*, that is *general*,—throughout all the world, which had now been lulled into peace under Augustus and the Romans; for there was a particular census taken in several provinces prior to this general one. So Paulus Orosius, Bede, Maldonatus, Jansenius, Toletus, Franciscus Lucas and others. *First*, again, because a second was taken ten years after, when Cyrenius was sent to Syria to superintend it, for the purpose of confiscating the property of Archelaus who was then exiled;—see Josephus, Antiq. bk. xviii., ch. 1. Tertullian, "against Marcion" bk. iv., ch. 7, 19, and 36, says that this first enrolment was made under Sentius Saturninus, who was sent expressly for the purpose by Augustus at the time when Cyrenius was governor of Syria in all things,—and, consequently, with respect to this census as well. Or, according to others, Cyrenius began the census, and, being called away to a war against the Homonadians—over whom he shortly after triumphed—left it to Saturninus to finish.

Hence it follows that this enrolment and census was not a lustral or quinquennial, but a new and universal one; the second and most celebrated of the three made by Augustus, in the Consulship of Censorinus and Asinius, as the stone of Ancyra, Suetonius, and Josephus, Antiq. xvii., ch. 3, have it. The first census was that which Augustus took twenty years before in his sixth consulate and the seventeenth year of his reign, M. Agrippa his son-in-law being his colleague, while the third was twenty years after, in the last year of his reign and his life, with Tiberius, who had married Julia at the death of Agrippa, his mother Livia having married Augustus.

The time occupied in making one of these enrolments was five years.

Cyrenius. This was P. Sulpitius Quirinus, Cyrinus, or Cyrinius whom Augustus had appointed tutor to Caius Cæsar when he went

to Syria, and whom he ordered to remain as governor when Caius died there, as Velleius the companion of Caius, Suetonius, Florus, Dio, and others record.

Ver. 3.—*And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.* To the cities from which their respective families took their origin; as the house of David, of which Joseph and Christ were born, took theirs from Bethlehem; David having been born and brought up in Bethlehem. The Jews had divided their nation into twelve tribes and these again into different families, and so the Romans, in taking the census among them, followed this division.

Indeed all this was taking place under the direction of God, that it might be clear to the whole world that Christ, then newly born in Bethlehem, was of the tribe of Judah and the house of David, and that He was the Messiah, as the Prophets had foretold.

To be taxed.—The Greek ἀπογράφεσθαι means both *to be enrolled* and *to make a declaration.* Each one was enrolled, and made a declaration of allegiance to him who enrolled him, namely: to Cyrenius, as the vicegerent of Augustus. For at Rome all as to whose loyalty towards Augustus and the Senate there was no doubt, were enrolled as citizens and subjects, but elsewhere they were said to make a declaration of allegiance, as being foreigners subdued by the Roman arms. Orosius, book vi., last chapter, infers from this enrolment that Christ was a Roman citizen, that He might, as it were, tacitly signify that all Christians must be subjects to the Roman Pontiff and Church.

Symbolically, by this enrolment is signified the coming of Christ to free us from the servitude of the devil, and subdue all the world to His faith and worship, not by force of arms, but by the efficacy of His grace; and for this cause it was that Augustus at that time refused the title of "Lord," as Orosius and others testify.

Again, S. Gregory, Homily viii. in Evang., says, "Why is it that a census of all the world is taken when the Lord is about to be born, except that it is by this means clearly shown that He was appearing

in the flesh who should enrôl His elect in eternity? For, on the other hand, it is said of the reprobate by the Prophet, Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the Just." So too Origen: "To one who regards the matter attentively it seems to present a kind of mystery, as though, in the enrolment of the whole world, it behoved Christ too to be enrolled, that being enrolled with all other men He might sanctify all, and that having entered in the census with all the world, He might grant to the world something in common with Himself."

Hence it appears that Christ was enrolled not immediately after His birth, but eight days after His circumcision; for at His circumcision the name of Jesus was given Him, and, in the presence of the inhabitants of Bethlehem, who were of the house of David, entered on the public tablets which Cyrenius forwarded to Augustus, to wit that Jesus the Son of Mary was born in Bethlehem, of the lineage of David. So Justin "Apol. ii., ad Antoninum Pium," Origen, and others.

Ver. 6.—*And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.* Here the prophecy of Micah, v. 2, that Christ should be born in Bethlehem, was fulfilled.

Went up—from Nazareth, where, at the annunciation of the angel, the Blessed Virgin had conceived Christ. Hence Christ was called by the Jews a Galilean and a Nazarene.

To Bethlehem, which was beyond Jerusalem, and two hours journey from it; so that from Nazareth to Bethlehem was a journey of three days or more, and the Blessed Virgin, though near her delivery, accomplished it, as many piously suppose, on foot. S. Bernard, in his sermon on the words "A great sign appeared in heaven" of the Apocalypse, says, "She went up to Bethlehem, her delivery being now at hand, bearing that most precious trust, bearing a light burden, bearing Him by whom she was borne. . . . She alone conceived without defilement, carried without trouble, and brought forth her Son without pain." S. Gregory, Hom. in Evang., says, "And well is He born in Bethlehem. For Bethlehem means

'The House of Bread.' And He it is who says, 'I am the Living Bread that came down from Heaven.' "

Her days were accomplished. She brought forth, not under the influence of the fatigue of the journey, but naturally.

Observe that Christ was born a little after the winter solstice, when the days begin to increase, John the Baptist a little after the summer solstice, when the days begin to decrease. For, as John himself said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." So S. Augustine remarks.

Ver. 7.—*And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for Him in the inn.* She *brought Him forth* naturally like other mothers, and was, therefore, truly and naturally the mother of Christ, and therefore of God, for Christ is God. Moreover the Blessed Virgin was more the parent of Christ than other mothers are of their children; for from her Christ received all His substance, and other sons receive it not only from their mother and but also from their father. Hence the love between Christ His mother was far greater than that between other mothers and their offspring, for the love which is divided between mother and father was, in the case of the Virgin, united and kept together, since she was to Him in place of both mother and father. Secondly, as she conceived so she brought forth, remaining a virgin, so that Christ was born while the womb of his mother was closed, and penetrated as the rays of the sun penetrate glass.

Thirdly, the Blessed Virgin, as she conceived without concupiscence, so also brought forth without pain, or any of the concomitants of ordinary childbirth. So say the Fathers everywhere.

So the Blessed Virgin was all vigorous and in good health, absorbed in the love and contemplation of her Son, each moment expecting His birth, and longing to see and embrace Him.

And she herself on a certain anniversary of the Nativity made a revelation to S. Bridget, as the latter tells us in book vi. ch. 88

of her Revelations, saying, "When He was born of me He went forth from my closed virgin womb with unspeakable joy and exultation. . . . I brought Him forth as thou hast now seen me, kneeling alone in prayer in the stable. For, with such exultation and gladness of soul did I bear Him that I felt no trouble nor any pain; but straightway I wrapped Him in the clean clothing which I had prepared long before. And when Joseph saw these things, he marvelled with great joy and gladness that I had brought forth without assistance." And in the "Angelic Discourse," ch. xv.—"God Himself bent low His majesty, and, descending into the womb of the Virgin . . . formed in purest fashion from the flesh and blood of the Virgin alone His Human Body. And therefore is that most chosen Mother fitly likened to the burning bush which Moses saw, that took no hurt. . . . Moreover as, when the Son of God was conceived, He entered throughout the whole body of the Virgin with His Divinity, so, when he was born with His Humanity and His Godhead, He was poured forth throughout her body, like all its sweetness shed whole from the bosom of the rose, the glory of maidenhood remaining entire in His Mother."

There is a question as to what place was the first to receive Christ at His birth. Barradius thinks it was the ground, that Christ might teach us humility. Others think that Christ was received into the arms of His Mother, with exceeding joy,—for this would seem to be becoming for such a mother and such a son, and would be natural, and is gathered from what Luke immediately adds, "and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes." Taking Him in her hands she adored Him, kneeling, and then kissed Him most sweetly, and wrapped Him in the clothes and bands. Suarez thinks that Christ, as soon as He was born, was laid by angels in the arms of His most holy and loving Mother; S. Gregory of Nyssa implies the same. This would be the place most becoming to Him, and most consonant to the wishes both of Son and Mother; and from thence she placed Him in the manger.

S. Bridget, Revel. bk. viii. ch. 47, implies that, at His birth,

Christ came of His own accord into the hands of His sweet Virgin Mother, and this may be piously believed with great probability.

Ribadaneira says that there is a tradition to the effect that the Blessed Virgin, as soon as she saw Christ, struck with wonder at God made Man, prostrated herself on the ground before Him, and, with the deepest reverence and joy of heart, saluted Him with the words, Thou art come to one who has longed for Thee, my God! my Lord! my Son!—not doubting that she was understood by Him, infant as He was; and that thus she adored Him, kissing his feet as God, His hands as her Lord, and His face as her Son.

Christ, says S. Bernard, sermon 4, "On the Nativity," when born cried and shed tears like other infants; both that He might begin to weep for and wash away our sins and also that He might conform himself to other infants; as Solomon, who was a type of Christ, says, "And when I was born, I drew in the common air, and fell upon the earth, which is of like nature, and the first voice which I uttered was crying, as all others do. . . . For there is no king that had any other beginning of birth." Wisdom vii. 3–5.

All the angels accompanied Christ, their God and Lord, to earth, as all royal households accompany a king when he goes abroad. They were amazed at God the immeasurable as it were straitened into a span's breadth, they venerated Him and adored Him. Such is the meaning of the Apostle where he says, "And again, when He bringeth His Firstborn into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him," Heb. i. 6.

And so it came to pass that this stable was, as it were, turned into the highest heaven,—full of angels, yea, of cherubim and seraphim, who all, leaving heaven, came down to adore their God made Man. Such was the work of the Incarnation and Nativity of the Word,—hitherto inconceivable, and, as it were, incredible to the angels, as being the supreme and appropriate work of the Divine Power, Wisdom, Justice, and Clemency—surpassing every understanding of men and of angels.

The reasons why Christ would be made Man and born on earth were many. First, that suffering and dying in the flesh He might redeem us from our sins and from hell. That He might teach us by example rather than word the way of salvation, and give us a perfect specimen of sanctity and of all virtues, but especially of the most profound humility. "Dig within thyself," says S. Augustine, "the foundation of humility, and so shalt thou arrive at the summit of charity."

Another reason was that Christ wished to become our kinsman and brother, nay, our very flesh and blood, in order that He might deal as flesh with flesh, as man with man, as equal with equal. Hence S. Bernard (*Serm.* 3, *super Missus Est*) says, "He has been sent;—let us strive to be made like as this little one; let us learn of Him, for He is meek and humble of heart, lest the Great God be made Man to no purpose."

A third reason is, that Christ took upon Him the meanness, the lowliness, the ills of our flesh, not for Himself but for us, to prick the icy hearts of men with the effectual stimulus of love and stir them up,—nay, force them, to love Him in return. For Christ, in His Incarnation, is ever calling aloud to us; I have given Myself all to thee, do thou in turn give thyself whole to Me. For this did I take flesh upon Me, that thou mightest say with Paul, I live now not I, but Christ lives in me. Listen to S. Ambrose,—"He therefore was a little infant that thou mightest be a perfect man—He swathed in bands that thou mightest be freed from the snares of death—He in a crib that thou mightest be on the altars—He on earth that thou mightest be in heaven—He had not room in the inn, that thou mightest have more abiding places among the inhabitants of heaven. . . . His poverty, therefore, is my heritage, and the weakness of my Lord is my strength."

A fourth reason is that we could not conceive the idea of God, who is a pure and uncreated spirit, so God clothed Himself in our flesh that we might see Him with our eyes and hear Him with our ears. It is this that the Church sings in the Preface of the Mass of the Nativity;—"Because by the Mystery of the Incarnate

Word a new effulgence of Thy glory has shone upon the eyes of our soul, that coming to know God visibly we may by Him be rapt into yearning after things that are not seen."

Firstborn—and only born. The firstborn is he who is born first, though no other be begotten after him; for such an one enjoys the rights and privileges of primogeniture.

And wrapped Him in swaddling clothes—poor and cheap, but clean and decent. Cyprian, or whoever is the author of the book, "On the Chief Works of Christ," in serm. 1, says, "In place of purple some rags are got together, instead of the regal equipage a few fragments; the Mother is also the nurse and pays devoted attention to her beloved Offspring." The Ethiopian version, instead of "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes," has "bound His thumbs," as though this were the sign by which the Infant was recognised by the shepherds. This is connected with the Ethiopian tradition that the Queen of Sheba, when she returned to Ethiopia from her visit to Solomon, brought forth a son called Menelich, whom she had conceived by him, and that she sent this son back to Jerusalem, putting on his thumb the ring which Solomon had given her, that by this sign he might be known by his father.

And laid Him in a manger. Passing over the various opinions on the subject recorded by Baronius and others, we may note that the place of Christ's birth was not the stable belonging to some rustic dwelling, but a cave hewn out of a rock at the eastern end of the city of Bethlehem. This is on the authority of S. Jerome, "Ep. 18 ad Marcellam," Bede, "de Locis Sanctis" ch. 8, and others. Whether the cave were within or without the city of Bethlehem authorities are not agreed. Bede says that a miraculous perennial spring took its rise in the rock of the cave, and was still flowing in his time; he also records that the whole cave was cased in marble by the Christians, and adorned with a magnificent church built above it. That there was in this cave a wooden manger, well known to all the shepherds of that part, is clear from the fact, that the shepherds soon found the spot when the angel

indicated it to them by this sign. This manger was taken from thence to Rome, and there placed in the Basilica of S. Maria Maggiore, where it is religiously visited and venerated.

Christ was placed in the manger for two reasons; first, because there was no place better fitted to hold Him—the straw in it forming a kind of bed on which the tender babe might repose; and, secondly, that in the rigour of winter, He might be warmed by the breath of the ox and the ass. For the tradition goes that an ox and an ass were tethered to this manger, and such is the common belief of the faithful. Of these two animals the Church interprets the words of Habakkuk iii. 2, "In the midst of two animals shalt Thou be known" (Vulgate), and appropriates also Isaiah i. 3, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib,"—such is the explanation given on these passages by S. Jerome, Nazianzen, Cyril, Paulinus, and others, quoted by Baronius.

Gregory of Nyssa "On the Nativity" gives a mystical reason as follows:—"A manger is the dwelling-place of beasts; in such a place is the Word born, that the ox may know his owner, and the ass the resting-place of his Lord. Now, the ox is the Jew under the yoke of the Law; and the ass is an animal fitted for bearing burdens, —the Gentile groaning under the grievous burden of idolatry. Moreover, the ordinary food of beasts is hay. . . . But the rational animal eats bread, wherefore the Bread of Life which came down from heaven is laid in the crib where the food of beasts is wont to be placed, that even animals void of reason may share the food of reasonable beings."

Many mothers of Saints, following the example of Christ, have brought forth their sons in a stable. The mother of S. Francis, being pregnant, and unable to gave birth to her child, advised by a poor pilgrim to betake herself to a stable, did as she was told, and there gave birth to S. Francis, the imitator of Christ's poverty. So says Ribadaneira in his life. Let all Christians look at and contemplate Christ in the manger, and consider Who and What He is, —what He does, for whom and why He does it. For Christ in the manger, God made Man, the Word become a babe,—is the love

and admiration of all the angels and all the faithful, at whom they stand amazed and shall be amazed for all eternity. For who will not be astonished if he look thoughtfully at this Child and ask Him, Who art thou, O Babe of Bethlehem? and hear Him answer; learn of Isaiah,—"Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah ix. 6.

"O God, we have thought of thy loving kindness in the midst of Thy temple. For this God is our God for ever and ever, He will be our guide unto death. Ps. xlviii.

Let Solomon, the wisest of kings, teach who this is;—"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. . . . When He prepared the heavens I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth . . . Then I was by him, as one brought up with him. Prov. viii. 22.

And let the Sybil of the Gentiles tell us in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue.

> "The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes,
> Renewed its finished course, Saturnian times
> Roll round again; and mighty years begun
> From their first orb, in radiant circles run.
> The base degenerate iron offspring ends;
> A golden progeny from heaven descends."
>
> —*Dryden's "Pastoral IV."*

With reason, then, does S. Augustine exclaim, "O miracles! O prodigies! O mysteries! Brethren, the laws of nature are changed, God is born as a Man, a virgin is pregnant. . . . God who is and was the Creator becomes a creature, He who is unmeasured is held, He who makes men rich is made poor, the Incorporeal is clothed with flesh, the Invisible is seen. . . . What was it that so great a God did, lying in so small a covering of flesh in the crib? Let us hear Him as He teaches us from His Manger-Throne,—teaching not by word but by example." I, who with three of my fingers poise the earth's vast mass, I who did create heaven and earth, the King of Glory and Lord of Majesty, beneath whom the columns of heaven tremble, and they that bear the globe are bowed down,—I, for love

of thee alone, O man, to deliver thee from thy sin and from the eternal flames of hell, and to bring thee to the happiness of heaven, have come "leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills;" —from heaven have I leapt down upon earth, from the bosom of the Father to the Virgin's womb. Through the bowels of My compassion have I "the Dayspring from on high" visited thee; I have joined in one person the Word with flesh, a spirit with the slime of earth, God with man, and most intimate have I made the union. I have become a little child, thy bone and thy flesh, I am made man to make thee God. Within the manger, the food, as it were of the ox and the ass, I lie among the beasts, because thou wast living like unto the beasts,—wallowing in flesh and blood. Thou hadst become as the horse and the mule that have no understanding. For man when he was in honour did not understand, and was comparable to the senseless brutes and became like unto them. Therefore did I take flesh upon Me, that thou mayest eat My flesh, that joining it to thy flesh thou mayest breathe the breath of Heavenly and Divine Life."

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If, then, thou wouldst not err, follow Me as the way to heaven; hearken unto Me as the Truth; embrace Me as the true Life. Vain is wealth, vain are pleasures, vain the honours of this world, which foolish mortals, like silly children, follow after and covet so greedily. True riches, true pleasures, undying honours are in heaven;—these doth God enjoy, and His angels and His saints;—aspire after these. Am I, Christ, the King of kings, born poor and needy, and dost thou, O Christian, seek after comforts and riches? Have I, the uncreated and illimitable Wisdom, chosen for Myself the pains of flesh and of spirit, and wilt thou indulge in the delights both of the one and of the other? I, whom the heavens cannot contain, am shut up in a tiny body and in this paltry manger, and art thou, Christian, ashamed to be despised as a little one and lowly? Not in Herod's palace would I be born, not in the palace of Augustus, but in a cavern, in a manger; I chose to dwell in humble cottages, and preferred the sheepfold before the royal court, but thou dost follow

after courts and the things of courts. Sons of men, why delight ye in vanity, and why seek ye after a lie?

"The stable cries aloud"—says S. Bernard, sermon 5, "On the Nativity"—"the manger cries aloud, His tears and His clothes. The stable cries out that it is ready to be the shelter and hospital of man who has fallen among thieves; the manger, that food is ready for man that is become like to the beasts; His tears and His clothes that with them man's bleeding wounds are now washed and wiped dry."

Because there was no room for them in the inn—namely, for Mary and Joseph. The reading "for Him," adopted by some, is, therefore, incorrect. Barradius, who is among these, gives as a reason why the Blessed Virgin brought forth in the cave, and why Christ was laid to rest in a manger and not in a bed, that all the places in the inn had already been taken by the crowd of richer people who were flocking thither for the census. It is very likely that in a small town like Bethlehem there was only one inn; as S. Luke here implies. But this came to pass by the supreme foreknowledge and providence of Christ, that he might give us an example of the greatest humility and poverty. Hiding Himself away, however, He was made manifest and glorified by God, through the star that summoned the wise men, the angels sent to the shepherds, the overturning of idols, and other miracles which Orosius, bk. vi. ch. 20, and Baronius in his annals, vol. 1, recount.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. In the fields and plains about Bethlehem. St. Jerome, Ep. 27, Brochardus, and others say that it was the same place where Jacob fed his flocks, and which was called the Tower of Edar, or the flock, because it is rich in pasturage; Gen. xxxv. 21. Here, then, it was that the angels sang "Glory to God in the highest;" and S. Helena built on the spot a Church in honour of the Holy Angels. The place is about a mile from Bethlehem.

Abiding in the field. In Greek ἀγραυλοῦντες—*passing the night* or *keeping their flocks in the field.* For αὐλή is *a fold* or *enclosed place*,

and ἀγρός is *a field*. Theophylact interprets *singing in the field*, as though from αὐλεῖν, *to sing*.

From these words Joseph Scaliger argues that Christ was born in September; for it is then, he says, and not in December, the depth of winter, when everything is stiff with frost or snow, that sheep are herded and fed in the fields. However, that Christ was born on the 25th of December is the common tradition of the Church and of all ages. In answer to Scaliger's argument, it may be urged that in warm climates, such as Palestine, flocks stay in the fields even in winter; whether in the open air, or in sheds prepared for the purpose, such as there doubtless would have been in "the Tower of Edar." So in Italy one sees sheep and cattle feeding on the plains the whole winter.

Keeping watch over their flocks by night. In the Greek φυλάσσοντες φυλακάς—keeping watch through the four watches of the night to guard their flocks lest they might be pillaged by wolves or robbers. Hence we gather that Christ was born in the night, probably after midnight, when the 25th day of December was beginning. And this is signified mystically (for there is another and literal interpretation of the passage) by the words of Wisdom xviii. 14:—"For while all things were in quiet silence, and that night was in the midst of her swift course, Thine Almighty Word leaped down from heaven out of Thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction."

In memory of the event the Church of the Three Shepherds was afterwards built on this spot. Lucius Dexter in his Chronicle, which he dedicates to S. Jerome, says, "A.U.C. 752, in the consulship of Lentulus and Messala, one year before the consulship of Augustus and Sylvanus, Christ is born, and is pointed out to three shepherds who were holy men." See Baronius, A.C. 1.

Ver. 9.—*And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.* "An angel," says Titus, "in a body which he had assumed to signify that God had assumed a body, and had made Himself visible to man by means of the flesh He had taken upon Him."

The author of the work "De Nativitate Dii," attributed to S. Cyprian, Toletus, Francis Lucas, and others think that this angel was Gabriel, for it was he who appeared to the Blessed Virgin and to Zachariah, and he was the agent in all this matter of the Incarnation.

Came upon them. In the Greek ἐπέστη αὐτοῖς, which some translate "stood over them," like an angel coming down from heaven. These shepherds, being Jews and believers, are called by an angel, for angels often appeared to the Jews; the Magi, being Gentiles and astrologers, are called by a star. See S. Gregory, Hom. 10, on the Gospels. Euthymius gives four reasons why the angel appeared first to the shepherds, and not to Scribes or rich citizens. The first is that here at Christ's crib, all things breathe poverty and lowliness, and the simple shepherds, poor and humble as they are, are more pleasing to God than proud rich men, and incredulous Scribes and Pharisees—"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight," Matt. xi. 25. Theophylact remarks on this passage: "He has overcome the learned by the unlearned, the rich by the poor; and by fishermen He caught the whole world like fish."

The second reason is that the shepherds were following the old way of life of the Patriarchs, the most innocent of industries. Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses were shepherds, and to them, as being holy and innocent, God often appeared by His angels. The third is that Christ was to be the shepherd of His people—"I am the Good Shepherd" (John x.) Hence it was once usual to paint Christ as a Shepherd surrounded by sheep, as we may still see in Rome in S. Cosmas and S. Damian and other ancient churches.

And the fourth is, in order that we may understand that to the shepherds of rational sheep—of the faithful—the Divine mysteries are first revealed by God, for them to teach their sheep—to the people committed to their care.

The author of "De Mirabilibus Sacræ Scripturæ," quoted in the works of S. Augustine (vol. iii. bk. iii. ch. 2), gives a fifth reason, namely, that Christ was the Lamb that was to be offered for the salvation of the world. It was fitting, then, that He should first be made kwnon to shepherds.

Tropologically, Christ reveals and communicates Himself to those who watch over their thoughts and actions as the shepherds watched their flocks, and consoles those who have no consolation for themselves. S. Bernard (Serm. 5, "On the Nativity") says, "The infancy of Christ has no consolation for them that speak much, nor His tears for them that laugh, nor his swaddling clothes for them that are clothed in fine raiment, nor His manger and His stable for those who love the chief seats in the assemblies. But we shall see that these things yield, perhaps, all their consolation to those who wait for their Lord in calmness and quietness. And let them know that the angels themselves bring no consolation for other than such as these."

And the glory of the Lord shone round about them. In the Arabic version, "the glory of the Lord arose upon them." Everywhere in Holy Scripture God has manifested His glory by a heavenly light. "By *glory of the Lord*," says Euthymius, "we are to understand Divine light." This brightness, then, was not that of the stars, but a far more august effulgence, the indication of the Majesty of God, whose ambassador the angel was. However, S. Ambrose, Serm. 10, "On the Feast of the Nativity," says, "When the Saviour arises, not only is the salvation of the human race renewed, but also the brightness of the sun himself; as the Apostle says in Ephes. i.—That by Him He might restore all things that are, whether in the heavens or on earth. For if the sun is darkened when Christ suffers, it must of necessity shine more brightly than usual when He is born. . . . . To sum up, I hold that it came to pass that the night began to wane while the sun, hastening to pay his homage to the birth of the Lord, brought forth his light upon the world before the night fulfilled her course. Indeed I call it not night at all, nor will I say that it had any darkness when the shepherds watched, the angels rejoiced, and

the stars paid their service. If the sun stood still at the prayer of Joshua the son of Nun, why should it not at the birth of Christ make haste to advance into the night?"

And they were sore afraid. They were filled with a holy and reverent fear, by reason both of the strangeness of the vision and the brightness, and also of the majesty of the heavenly messenger, —a majesty which so strikes men as almost to stupefy them, so that of old the opinion prevailed that he who had seen an angel must die, according to the words of Manoah, the father of Samson, "We shall surely die because we have seen God." Judg. xiii. 22. From this we may learn that the sign of a good angel is that he first terrifies us and then consoles us.

Ver. 10.—*And the angel said unto them; Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all people*—but first to you, whom first I summon to visit and adore the Messiah that is born.

Ver. 11.—*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* In Bethlehem, of the seed and lineage of David. Each word here has its weight, and suggests new matter for joy, as is clear to every one who ponders them deeply. Toletus makes a full and minute examination of the passage. The name "Christ" denotes priesthood and kinghood, says Eusebius in the Catena, for both kings and priests were anointed, and were therefore called "Christi"—that is "consecrated by anointing."

Ver. 12.—*And this shall be the sign unto you* (by which you may know this child from others recently born), *ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.* For other children born at that time were in houses and in beds,—only Christ was in a manger in a stable. Hence it appears that this manger was commonly known to every one, unless we suppose, as Toletus would have it, that the angel pointed out to the shepherds with his finger, or by an inward inspiration, the cave where the manger was. The angel gives this sign that the shepherds may not suppose, according to the Jewish notion, that their Messiah, as King of the Jews, was to be sought in the royal palace of Herod or in any

place of the same kind. For this was Christ's first Advent—the Advent of Humility, as His second Advent, to judge the world, will be one of Majesty. The sign, then, of the Word Incarnate and straitened is the lowliness of the swaddling bands and the manger. As S. Bernard says, Serm. 1, "On the Nativity," "What more unworthy, what more detestable, what more severely punishable than that, seeing the God of Heaven become a little child, man should of his own free will set himself in opposition to magnify himself upon the earth? It is a trait of intolerable insolence that, where His Majesty has effaced Itself, a poor worm should be puffed up and swollen with pride."

Ver. 13.—*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying.* Because, as I said at verse 7, all the angels accompanied Christ to earth and adored Him, and they are His battle array and His host,—the army of Heaven that fight strongly for God against the evil spirits and against the ungodly. Wherefore He is called the "God of *Sabaoth*," that is, of armies. So it was that Jacob, the type of Christ, fleeing from his brother Esau, saw an army of angels that brought him aid; wherefore he said, "This is the camp of God," and called the place *Mahanaim*—"The camp in double," on account of the two ranks or bodies of angels which he saw coming to protect him, Gen. xxxii. Again, if the stars of the morning praised God, and all the sons of God (that is, the angels) rejoiced at the creation of the world, as Job says (ch. xxxviii. 7), how much more did they do so at the Incarnation and Nativity of the Word?

Ver. 14.—*Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men* (of good will "bonæ voluntatis," Vulgate). So the Syriac, Egyptian, Coptic, and Persian versions also have it, except the words "of good will," of which we will treat presently. "In the Highest" may be taken with reference both to "God"—glory to God who dwells in the highest heavens; and also, and preferably with reference to "*glory*." In the highest heavens the angels give glory to God, as on earth men enjoy peace through Christ who is now born. Again, these words may be taken either in an *affirmative* sense—

supplying "*is;*" or in an *optative* sense—supplying "*be.*" In the former sense it is, Now is there glory to God in heaven, and peace on earth. For the inhabitants of heaven glorify the mercy, the wisdom, and the fidelity of God, in that He has now exhibited to the world the Christ promised by Him to the patriarchs, and hence there is peace on earth, for that Christ is born to reconcile to God, as the peace-making King, men who are born sons of wrath. So Toletus and Maldonatus. In the *optative* sense, praised and glorified be God in heaven, and let all the inhabitants of heaven bless and glorify Him, because He has deigned to send Christ upon the earth, that He, being incarnate, may bring to men peace—that is, reconciliation, grace, salvation, and all good things. Therefore let heaven and earth praise God, and let all the dwellers therein rejoice before Him, because Christ is born, who is the glory of God, the joy of angels, the peace of men. So Jansenius, Baradius, and others.

The Greek versions make this hymn consist of three members:—(1) Glory to God in the Highest, (2) on earth peace, (3) good will among men. So, too, the Syriac, and the Arabic, which instead of "good will" has "rejoicing" [*hilaritas*]; and the Greek fathers everywhere adopt this reading—S. Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, &c.

But all the Latins, and, among the Greeks, Origen, S. Chrysostom, and Cyril, read, and with better reason, for εὐδοκία—*good will*, εὐδοκίας—*of good will*, making the hymn consist of two members. For as glory is given to God as to Him who is glorified, so peace is given to men of good will as to those whom the peace of Christ belongs and befits; and in this way the concatenation of the whole sentence hangs better together. The peace on earth cannot be supposed to be other than that which belongs to men of good will. S. Bernard, in his Epist. 126 to the Bishop of Aquitania, says: "How then shall the peace of men stand before God, or with God, if His glory cannot be secured to God among men? O foolish sons of Adam, who, despising peace, and seeking after glory, lose both peace and glory!"

And on earth peace. The peace of men with God, to whom

Christ has reconciled us; and, following on this, *peace*—that is, tranquillity of mind; and in the third place, peace and concord with other men. Moreover, *peace* meant for the Jews every good—all prosperity and happiness. Some say that this peace is Christ Himself, "For He is our peace, who hath made both one," Eph. ii. 14; for "it pleased God through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, bringing into peace all things, whether they be in heaven or on earth, by the blood of His Cross," Colos. i. 20 (Vulg.), S. Augustine (*Orat. contra Judæos, Paganos, et Arianos*, c. x.), says: "Within the Virgin's womb there were celebrated spiritual nuptials, God was joined to the flesh, and the flesh clave unto God, coming forth from hence like a bridegroom from his chamber, at whose wedding all creation was stirred up and seemed to exult. For the choir of angels proclaim, as the result of these nuptials, peace to men of good will; for He that was the Son of God became the Son of Man."

Good will. These words may be taken in three ways—First, with reference to, and as qualifying, "*men.*" Peace be to men, and yet not to *all* men, but to those that are of good will. So S. Ambrose reads. Secondly, S. Leo (*Serm. on the Nativity*): "Peace be to men, *to make them of good will*, that they may in all things subject and conform their will to God's will and law."

But, as the Greek is εὐδοκία, which corresponds to the Hebrew רצון, *ratson*, and is generally attributed in Holy Scripture not to man but to God Himself, signifying the grace, benevolence, satisfaction, and love of God towards men, Gregory of Nyssa, Theophylact, and Euthymius give the following interpretation: Peace be to men, whom God deigned to pursue with this grace and display of good will—with His benevolence and love, freely and without their merit; to give them such a Saviour and Reconciler to make peace between Himself and them. So, in Ps. v., it is said, "With the buckler of Thy good will" (in Greek εὐδοκίας) "hast Thou crowned us" (Vulg.)—that is, surrounded us, as with a crown, with a buckler, which is Thy benevolence. And in S. Matt. xvii., "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"—in the Greek

ηὐδόκησα. So, too, "men of good will" are elsewhere called "the sons of love." See Eph. i. 9.

Ver. 15.—*And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass. This thing*, a metonomy, common in Scripture, by which the word is put for the thing signified by it, as in ch. i. 37, "No *word*"—that is, nothing "shall be impossible with God." And in 2 Kings i. 4, "What is the *word* that is come to pass?"

Which the Lord hath made known unto us. In the Greek ἐγνώρισε —*revealed, made known.* Yea, and has given us, rather than the scribes and all others, a sign by which we shall find the Messiah that is born. Wherefore, if we, who have been invited by Him through an angel, do not visit and adore Him who is born for us, and revealed first to us, we shall be ungrateful to God, to the angels, and to Christ, and enemies to ourselves.

Ver. 16.—*And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. With haste*, from their longing and zeal to see Christ. Hence S. Ambrose remarks, "Thou seest that the shepherds make haste; for no one seeks after Christ with slothfulness." And Bede, "The shepherds hasten, for the presence of Christ must not be sought with sluggishness; and many perchance that seek Christ do not merit to find Him, because they seek Him slothfully."

Ver. 17.—*And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. They made known* —in the Greek διεγνώρισαν—they knew distinctly and with certainty. Or it may be translated, according to Pagninus, *they made known;* Theophylact has, *they published abroad.* So, too, the Syriac version; and hence it follows:—

Ver. 18.—*And all they that heard it wondered at these things which were told them by the shepherds.* The *and* is not found in the Greek, the Syriac, or the Arabic version, and with this omission the sense is plainer. But, according to the Roman version, the meaning is, they wondered at the birth of the Messiah, and at the other

things that were said about him by the shepherds, namely, that an angel had appeared, that angels had sung "Gloria in excelsis," and Christ was lying in a manger, &c.

So the Gloss, Francis Lucas, and others. Lyranus, however, interprets the "*and*" as equivalent to "*that is.*" Hence it appears that the shepherds told to many what they had heard and seen respecting the birth of Christ; and that therefore many went to the crib and saw Christ; but that those only believed in Him whose hearts God touched efficaciously, while others, offended at His poverty, despised Him. S. Ambrose assigns the reason for this—"The person of the shepherds was not despicable—assuredly the more precious in the eyes of faith, the more despicable it was to worldly wisdom. Not the schools crowded with their bands of wise men did the Lord seek, but a simple folk, that knew not how to deck out and colour the things they had heard. For simplicity is what is sought, ambition is not wanted."

Ver. 19.—*But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart*—putting them together and comparing them—not as Bede would have it, the prophecies made about Christ by the prophets, but the things seen and reported by the shepherds with reference to the angels—the "Gloria in excelsis," &c., with what she had experienced herself—the annunciation of Gabriel, the prophecy of Elizabeth and of Zacharias, and the other things which she herself had witnessed and felt in herself. And this she did, first, that seeing the wondrous harmony—all things agreeing so well together—she might be the more confirmed in her faith that the only begotten Son of God was born of her. So speaks S. Ambrose. Secondly, that by the sweet contemplation of these circumstances so consonant among themselves, she might feed her mind, and look with sure hope for the rest—namely, that God would bring this work to an end, and redeem mankind by Christ. Thirdly, that in good time she might unfold all these things and narrate them in order to the apostles, and especially to S. Luke, who was destined to write of them. Observe here in the Virgin the rare example of maidenly silence and modesty, of heavenly prudence, and of the firmest faith and hope, as she

wonders at the present and waits for the future. She was comparing the signs of deepest loneliness which she saw with what she knew of His Supreme Majesty, the stable with heaven, the swaddling-clothes with that which is spoken of in Ps. civ., "covered with light as with a garment," the crib with the throne of God, the beasts with the seraphim.

Ver. 20.—*And the shepherds returned* (to their flock, says Euthymius, for God would have the faithful, however exalted by Him, remain in the discharge of their several callings), *glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.* Hence it is clear that the shepherds remained constant in the faith and gospel of Christ—nay, exulting and jubilant in the joy of the Holy Spirit at having seen Him.

Ver. 21.—*And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb—when eight days were fulfilled*—when the eighth day from His nativity was come. *That the child should be circumcised*—this indicates that He was circumcised, implying that He underwent the rite, not of obligation, but freely and of His own will. For, in the first place, He was God—the Author of the law, and, therefore, not bound by the law; and, in the second place, He was not of the common generation of men, who are procreated of the propagation of sin and conceived in iniquity, says Bede, but conceived and born of the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, without original sin, for wiping out of which circumcision was instituted. For circumcision was the sign and stigma of sin, the cautery with which it was burnt out, and in Christ there was no sin, no lust. So in His circumcision Christ humbled Himself to a still greater degree than in His nativity—in the latter He took upon Him the form of man, in the former the character of a sinner.

Here are seven reasons why Christ would of His own accord be circumcised, drawn from the writings of S. Cyprian, S. Augustine, Bede, and others, and given by S. Thomas, (part iii., quæst. 37, art. 1):—*First*, to show the reality of His human flesh, as against

Manichæus, who said that He had a phantom body, Apollinarius, who said that the body of Christ is consubstantial with the Godhead, and Valentinus, who said that He brought His body from heaven.

Secondly, to sanction the rite which God had instituted.

Thirdly, to show that He was of the seed of Abraham, who had received the ordinance of circumcision as a sign of the faith which He had in reference to Christ.

Fourthly, to take away all excuse from the Jews, lest they should not accept Him if He were uncircumcised.

Fifthly, to commend to us by His own example the virtue of obedience. Hence it was that He was circumcised on the eighth day, as the law prescribed.

Sixthly, that, having come in the likeness of the flesh of sin, He might not seem to reject the remedy by which the flesh had been wont to be cleansed of sin.

Seventhly, that, bearing the burden of the law Himself, He might free others from that burden, "God sent forth His Son made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," Gal. iv.

S. Leo (*Serm.* 2 *on the Nativity*) adds as another reason that by this rite Christ's character was hidden from the devil: "The merciful and Almighty Saviour, so conducting the beginning of His assumption of human nature as to hide the virtue of the Godhead inseparable from His humanity with the veil of our infirmity, eluded the craft of the enemy, who was secure in the supposition that the birth of this child, begotten for the salvation of mankind, was no less liable to His power than that of all other children who are born."

S. Augustine (*Serm.* 9 *on the Nativity*) gives yet another reason —that putting an end to the carnal, Christ might put in its place that spiritual circumcision which consists in the mortification and cutting away of vices and concupiscence—"Christ," he says, "took circumcision upon Himself as about to do away with circumcision; He admitted the shadow as about to give light—the figure as He that should fulfil the verity."

Lastly, by this act He began that suffering by which He became the Redeemer and Saviour of the world. So it was that in this rite the name of "Jesus" was given Him, because He healed not our infirmities with drugs, as the physicians do, but by taking them upon Himself and making satisfaction for them to God, so earning the power of healing all the diseases of soul and of body, all our passions, temptations, sorrows, and afflictions, whether in this life or in the life to come. Art thou afflicted, then, with fear or over-scrupulousness, with anger or bitterness, with sorrow or poverty? Call upon Jesus, and thou shalt feel that He is thy Consoler and thy Saviour.

Christ was circumcised in the cave where He was born by some priest or Levite, and felt greater pain than other infants, in that He had the use of reason which other infants lack, and possessed a more delicate and active sense of touch.

His name was called Jesus. The name of *Jesus* signifies the function of Saviour in its greatest fulness, inasmuch as He not only saved men Himself, but gave to His apostles and to those like them the power of saving. This is what is implied by the word *Josue*, or, as the Hebrews say, *Jehosua*. Let the faithful then remember that they are children of Jesus, and that they ought therefore to imitate Him in bringing about the salvation of souls.

Which was so named of the angel (when Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin His conception, ch. i. ver. 31) *before He was conceived in the womb.* For Christ was conceived at the end of the Annunciation, when the Blessed Virgin answered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word." In this sentence S. Luke gives us to understand that the name of Jesus had been decreed by God for this Child from all eternity, to signify that He was to be the Saviour of the world.

Observe here how God joins and couples in Christ the humble with the sublime, the human with the divine, the poison with the antidote, to show that in Him human nature was joined to the

Divine Majesty. Christ would be circumcised, so taking on Him the appearance of sin, but presently, when He wipes away this appearance He gives Him the name of Jesus—the Saviour that heals all sins. So, too, He would have Christ born in a stable and laid in a manger, as being poor and abject; but soon He summoned by the star the three kings, and by the angel the shepherds to adore Him. So, again, He would have Him suffer, be crucified, and die; but at the same time He darkened the sun and the moon, rent the rocks and shook the earth, that all the elements might testify of, and mourn for, the ignominious murder of their Creator. The more, then, Christ humbled Himself, the more the Father exalted Him. To thee, Christian, He will do the same; wherefore fear not to be humbled, knowing for certain that by this means thou art to be exalted. For the road to glory is humiliation, according to that promise of Christ, "Every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Ver. 22.—*And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord.* Observe that here three different ordinances are intertwined and joined together. The first is that of Lev. xii. 2, *et seq.*, that a woman, if she have borne a male child, shall remain unclean for forty days, and then be purified in the temple legally, that is by the sacrificial rite prescribed by the law. The second, that the mother offer to God a lamb, as a holocaust for her own purification (not that of her child, as S. Augustine would have it), and a young turtle-dove or pigeon as a sin-offering, if she be rich; but if poor, only a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons (Lev. xii. 6, 7). And the third, that if the offspring be a male, and the firstborn, it be set before God, and offered to Him as His due, and holy, that is, consecrated on account of the immunity of the firstborn of the Hebrews granted them by God, when the firstborn of Pharaoh and the Egyptians were smitten by the angel in the time of Moses (Exod. xiii. 1). The child, however, so offered might be redeemed by his parents for five shekels (Num. iii. 47). Symbolically, these five shekels

stood for the five wounds of Christ, with which, as with a price, He redeems the human race.

The days of her purification. In the old law the woman bearing a child was unclean, with a natural, a legal, and a moral uncleanness; but especially because she bore a child whom she conceived in original sin. The *natural* uncleanness was that physically incidental to her gestation and delivery; and the *legal* defilement was consequent upon this, for the law, on account of these impurities, regarded her as impure, and directed that she be kept away from the temple, and be held, as it were, "unclean" for forty days, until, on the fortieth day, she was purified by the prescribed rite.

With reference to the question whether the Blessed Virgin suffered this impurity, S. Jerome (*Ep. 22 ud Eustochium*), John of Avila, commenting on Lev. xii., and Erasmus on this same passage, affirm that she did. All other authorities, however, agree in the contrary view, since the Virgin's parturition was perfectly pure. See S. Augustine (*de Quinque hæresibus*, ch. v). This point has been treated in what has been said on v. 7 of the present chapter. Hence the Blessed Virgin incurred no defilement, and therefore was not bound by the law of purification. Yet, in her zeal for humility, in order to make herself like other women who bear children, that she might not give scandal in seeming to be singular, and that she might conceal her virginity and her conception by the Holy Ghost, the Blessed Virgin was willing to be purified, even as Christ, for similar reasons, was willing to be circumcised. Hence S. Bernard (*Serm. 3 on the Purification*) says: "In this conception, and in this child-birth, there was nothing impure, nothing sinful, nothing that had to be purged, for this offspring is the fount of purity, and is come to make a cleansing of sins. What is there in me for a legal observance to purify—in me, who, by this immaculate parturition, am become most pure? Truly, O Blessed Virgin, thou hadst no need for purification; but had thy Son need of circumcision? Be thou among women as one of them, for so too is thy Son among men."

Tropologically, the purification of the soul is penance, and this the Blessed Virgin underwent, not for her own sins, seeing that she had none, but for those of others, as Christ did. Still she did not undergo the *Sacrament* of Penance, because she had no sins of her own to confess. See S. Chrysostom, Tertullian, S. Augustine, and S. Ambrose in his book "On Penance."

To present Him to the Lord. The Syriac version has "*in the presence of the Lord.*" The Blessed Virgin, holding Christ in her hands, on bended knee, offered Him to God with the greatest reverence and devotion, saying, "Behold, O Eternal Father, this is Thy Son whom Thou hast wished to take flesh from me for the salvation of men. To Thee I render Him, and to Thee I offer Him entirely, that Thou mayest do with Him and with me as it shall please Thee, and by Him mayest redeem the world." So saying, she presented Him to the priest as to the representative of God; and then she redeemed Him with five shekels, as the law prescribed.

Ver. 23.—*As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord* (Exod. xiii. 12)—that is, shall be offered and consecrated to God as a thing dedicated and holy. Christ was not bound by this law, both because He subsisted in the Person of the Word, which is bound by no laws, and also because He did not open His mother's womb, but came forth while it remained closed. So Cyril (*Hom. De Occurs. Dom.*), Pope Hormisdas (*Ep.* i. ch. iii.), Bede, and others.

Rupertus, John of Avila, Jansenius, and Maldonatus, therefore, who take the phrase "*that openeth the womb*" as merely equivalent to "*first-born*," and suppose, on this ground, that Christ was included by these words, but otherwise excepted from the law as being God and the Son of God, are incorrect in their view. Lastly, I quote the following from S. Bernard's "Sermon on the Purification"—"Very slight, brethren, does this oblation seem, in which He is but presented to the Lord, redeemed with birds, and straightway taken back. The time shall come when He shall be offered up not in the temple, nor within the arms of Simeon, but outside the

city in the arms of the Cross. The time shall come when He shall not be redeemed with blood not his own, but with His own blood shall redeem others, because God the Father hath sent him to be the redemption of His people. That shall be an evening sacrifice, this is a morning sacrifice—this is the more joyous, that shall be the fuller."

Ver. 24.—*And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons,* because they were poor; for the rich were obliged to give in addition to this a lamb for a holocaust. Although the three kings had offered to Christ a great quantity of gold, still the Blessed Virgin, zealously affected towards poverty, accepted but little of it, that she might show her contempt of all earthly things, and what she took she spent in a short time, says John of Avila, on S. Matt. ii. Quest. 47; or, if she took much, say S. Bonaventure and Dionysius, she distributed it among the poor. And, lastly, because she was by her condition poor, she would be reckoned among the poor, and offer the gift of the poor.

The purification of the Blessed Virgin is commemorated by the Church on the second day of February, in order, Baronius says, to abolish the Lupercalia, which used to be celebrated at Rome on that day. The order of the rite of purification was as follows:—First, the woman came into the "court of the unclean"—she being unclean until her purification. Next, she offered a sin-offering of a turtle-dove or a young pigeon. It is probable that she was also sprinkled with water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer, this water being, as it were, an "aqua lustralis" used in all purifications.

Then she offered the infant to God, and redeemed him. And, lastly, she offered to God as a whole burnt-offering of thanksgiving a lamb, or else a turtle-dove, or a pair of young pigeons. These last two acts were performed by the woman (by this time purified) standing in the "court of the clean;" there she would offer the infant at the door of the tabernacle; and there watch from afar off her holocaust being offered in the "court of the priests"—for between the court of the priests and that of the people there was a

wall or a partition three feet high, so that the people could, from their court, watch the offerings, and all that was being done in the court of the priests.

Tropologically, the turtle-doves and the pigeons which the woman used to offer for her *sin*, *i.e.*, her defilement or legal uncleanness, signified the groaning or compunction of the penitent by which sins are expiated, especially when they accompany the sacrament of expiation. Moreover, the Blessed Virgin, having no sin, needed no sacrament to expiate it, but she received the Sacrament of Baptism as a profession of the Christian religion, that of Confirmation, the Eucharist, and perhaps also Extreme Unction. She entered into the state of matrimony with Joseph, but this was not a sacrament in the old law. She never confessed her sins or received absolution from a priest, in that she had no sins. It may be said, however, that the Blessed Virgin had reason to fear lest she had been guilty of some distraction in prayer, some venial negligence in word or thought, and that she might have confessed such as these, since, as S. Gregory says, "It is the characteristic of good souls to acknowledge fault where there is no fault." And this is true in the case of sinners and those in the state of original sin, but not for those who are innocent and unspotted as the Blessed Virgin was. Wherefore, as the angels see clearly all their own actions, and the defects—even the most trifling—in them, and as Adam, too, saw his own actions when he was in the state of innocence—in accordance with the perfection which belongs to this state—so the Blessed Virgin in like manner saw all her own acts in the past and in the future, and knew that they were most pure and most holy, and altogether without any defect, even venial, and for this reason she could not confess them as sins. She did not, however, lift herself up on that account, but humbled herself the more, knowing this to be the gift of God and not her own merit. Hence the opinion of Sylvester, in the "Golden Rose" (tit. 3, ch. 53), to the effect that the Blessed Virgin received the Sacrament of Penance and was accustomed to confess venial sins conditionally to S. John, must be flatly rejected, especially as absolution cannot be given on uncertain matter, but the penitent, to

be capable of it, must confess some particular sin—Vasquez (part iii., disp. 119, ch. 7).

Ver. 25.—*And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.* Calvin would have it that Simeon was of obscure birth and unknown; but that he was venerable by his age and his sanctity appears from what follows here. Many hold that he was a priest, and that it was in this capacity that he blessed Mary and Joseph. So say Lyranus, Dionysius, Cajetan, Francis Lucas, Toletus, S. Athanasius (in "The Common Essence of the Father and the Son"), S. Cyril (*De Occursu Dom.*), S. Epiphanius ("Treatise on the Fathers of the Old Testament"), and Canisius (*de Deipara*, bk. iv. ch. 10). But Theophylact, Euthymius, Jansenius, and Barradius are of opinion that he was a layman, and gave his blessing not as a priest but as an old man.

And the same was just. From this Galatinus (*De Arcanis Fidei*, l. 1, cap. 3) gathers that Simeon was the disciple and son of Hillel, who, a little before the birth of Christ, was the founder of the Scribes and Pharisees, as S. Jerome states on Isa. viii. The words of Galatinus are: "Simeon, the son of Hillel, whom the Talmudists, by reason of his extraordinary sanctity, call 'Saddic' the Just. In whom (as it is related in the 'Pirke Avoth' or 'the chapters of the fathers') the rule of the great Academy of the Synagogue came to an end. He spoke many things concerning the Messiah, and, at length, being in his extreme old age, and having received an answer from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death without seeing the Messiah, receiving Christ Himself in his arms, he confirmed, in the presence of Christ, the truth of those things which he had taught about Him under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And his noteworthy sayings are to be found scattered about in the books of the Talmudists."

Genebrardus (Chronology, bk. ii.) is of the same opinion, and adds: "For the belief that with Simeon the spirit of the great Synagogue—a spirit less than the prophetic but greater than the common—died out, the Talmudists are our authority in the treatise

'Pirke Avoth.' The Rabbi Moses, the Egyptian, records that he was not only the disciple, but also the son of Hillel, and the teacher, and indeed the father, of Gamaliel, at whose feet Paul learnt the law." All this, however, while it appears highly probable, is at the same time uncertain. There were many Simeons or Simons (for the two names are identical) who were just, as, for instance, Simeon the high priest, the son of Oniah, called "the Just," and spoken of with praise at some length in Ecclus. l. 1. Besides, the successors and disciples of Hillel, the Scribes and Pharisees, were in the highest degree hostile to Christ.

Devout. In Greek εὐλαβής—religious, God-fearing. *Waiting for the consolation of Israel*—the coming of the Messiah, who was to console Israel, that is, the faithful people, and set them free from the oppression of Satan, of Herod, the Romans, and the Scribes and Pharisees. For, eager for the common weal, "he sought," says S. Ambrose, "the good of his people rather than his own." By the transferring of the sceptre from Judah to Herod, according to the prophecy of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 10), by the completion of the seventy weeks of Dan. ix., and by other prophecies, Simeon knew that the coming of Christ was at hand, to deliver Israel—that is, the faithful—from all evil, as well from their sins as from all miseries, partly in this life, partly in the life to come. Christ, then, is the consolation of the faithful, for except in Him there is no hope of salvation, but only despair and desolation. Hence Isaiah, ch. xl. 1, promising the coming of Christ, says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God: speak unto the heart of Jerusalem." And in ch. li. 3, "The Lord shall comfort Sion;" and again in lxi. 1, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to comfort all them that mourn." And in 2 Cor. i. 5, S. Paul says, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." In the time of Christ the condition, as well of the State as of the Church of Israel, was one of the deepest affliction. Their body politic, while it lacked its own chiefs, was under the yoke of Herod and the Pagan Romans, and their Church, on the other hand, was under bondage to impious priests, to Scribes and

Pharisees; and in S. Matt. xxiii. 5, Christ tells us what manner of men these were—how they oppressed the people, and into what errors and vices they led them.

And the Holy Ghost was upon him, both sanctifying him and conferring on him the gift of prophecy. Observe that in Holy Scripture the Holy Ghost is said to come to, or be in, any one not only by the grace which makes that person acceptable, but also by any grace, "*gratis data*," *i.e.*, conferred not necessarily in consideration of the merit of the recipient, and not for his own benefit, but for that of others, *e.g.*, the grace of prophecy, as here in the case of Simeon. So in ch. i. 35, the Holy Ghost is spoken of as about to come upon the Blessed Virgin, that she may conceive a Son, and become the Mother of God; this is a grace, "*gratis data.*" And again in ver. 41 of the same chapter Elizabeth is spoken of as full of the Holy Spirit when she began to prophecy.

Upon him. In the Greek ἐπ' αὐτόν, the Holy Ghost, coming down upon him, took possession of his soul, so that he seemed not so much a man of this earth as a celestial and divine being, and this on purpose that his testimony as to Christ might be irrefragable and beyond dispute.

Celsus (*De Incredulitate Judæorum apud Vigilium*)—to be found among the works of Cyprian) gives a tradition to the effect that Simeon was blind, and recovered his sight when he touched Christ; but S. Luke would not have been silent about so great a miracle, and which would so clearly have been in place here.

Ver. 26.—*And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.* "*It was revealed*" by a divine oracle and promise—the Greek expression is χρηματίζειν. "*The Lord's Christ*"—the Messiah, anointed with the unction of the Holy Spirit and the plentitude of grace. (Isa. xi. 2.)

In this Simeon was privileged far beyond Abraham, Isaac, and all the patriarchs and prophets, who, as the apostle says, Heb. xi. 13, "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and embraced them." Hence it is plain

that Simeon was a man of singular holiness, and full of holy aspirations and zeal.

Ver. 27.—*And he came by the Spirit into the Temple.* By the impulse of the Holy Spirit, moved and incited by the Holy Spirit, say Euthymius and Theophylact. And the same Spirit who urged him thither gave him the sign by which he should know Christ among so many infants that were then being offered in the Temple, or, rather, showed Him to him, inwardly prompting him and saying, Behold, this is Christ, whom I promised thee that thou shouldst see before thy death.

Timothy, a priest of Jerusalem, in his *Oratio de Simeone*, thinks that he must have seen the Virgin surrounded with light in the midst of the other women, and by this mark understood her to be the Mother of the Messiah. The Carthusian (Denis), too, says, "Perhaps he saw some divine splendour in the countenance of the child."

Hence we may learn how God guides the mind and the paths of His saints that they may fall in with the good predestined for them by Him. Wherefore we must pray diligently, especially when about to undertake a journey, for this direction, that we may be preserved from evil, and blessed with good issues; saying with the Psalmist, "O Lord, show me Thy ways and teach me Thy paths," Ps. xxv. 4 "Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments," Ps. cxix. 35.

We read, in the life of S. Ephrem, that, when he was entering a certain city, he prayed to God that he might fall in with something that should edify him. A harlot met him, and stared so hard at him, that he asked with great severity why she acted so immodestly; and he received this answer, "Let woman look upon man, for from him was she made, but let man fix his gaze upon the earth, of which he was formed." The man of God felt that the rebuke was just, and, being deeply touched by it, gave thanks to God because he had received from a harlot a lesson so salutary.

And when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law. In the Greek καὶ ἐν τῷ εἰσαγαγεῖν—when they *had* brought. This sentence is dependent on the next verse.

Ver. 28.—*Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said.* Martial says of the dying swan—

> "Sweet cadences the swan with voice that fails in death
> Uttereth; his own dirge shaped of his own dying breath."

And so the last utterances of the wise are the sweetest, their powers maturing with years. Again Cicero tells us in the first Tusculan Disputation, "Not without reason are swans dedicated to Apollo, since they seem to have from him a gift of prophecy, by virtue of which, foreseeing the good that there is in death, they die with joy and in the act of singing." And Simeon here foresees in this way the joy that through Christ is to come to him after his death, which must soon take place.

Ver. 29.—*Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word. Lettest thou*—in Greek ἀπολύεις, *loosen*, as it were, from the prison-chains of this body, that I may go to the liberty, peace, and rest which the fathers in limbo enjoy. *In peace*, so Tobias, ch. iii. 6; and Abraham, Gen. xv. 15, desired to die in peace. Euthymius here understands by *peace*—

1. The calming of his feelings, which had fluctuated between hope and fear with reference to his seeing Christ.

2. The peace of an intrepid soul that did not fear death.

3. His joy.

4. Peace may be taken to mean that security from the dangers of the world which death brings. S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Mortalitate*, c. i.) says, "Joyful at his approaching death, sure that it must soon come, he took the Child in his hands, and, blessing the Lord, lifted up his voice and said, Now Thou dost dismiss, &c., . . . thus proving and bearing witness that then is there peace for the servants of God, then an easy and tranquil mind when, delivered from out the whirlpools of the world, we make for the haven of our eternal habitation and our peace."

Thy word. Thy promise, says Theophylact, when Thou didst promise to prolong my life until I should see Christ; now have I seen Him, therefore let me depart and die.

Symbolically, S. Augustine (*Serm.* 20 *de Tempore*) says, "Now,

Lord, let me depart in peace, because I see thy peace—Christ, Who shall make peace between heaven and earth—between God and angels and men—between men and themselves."

And Simeon obtained his wish from God, for soon after he went to his rest. S. Epiphanius (*De Prophetarum vita*, c. xxiv.) puts S. Simeon among the prophets. "Simon," he says, "departed this life full of years and utterly worn out; yet did he not obtain at the hands of the priests the last honours of burial." He gives no reason, however, why this should have been so, but it is thought that, in openly announcing the advent of Christ, he brought upon himself the envy and hatred of the other priests.

Tropologically, the Church sings this hymn of Simeon every evening in the Office of Compline, for two reasons:—First, to admonish the faithful, and especially ecclesiastics, to think upon death, and so live as though they were to die in the evening; and, again, that they may acquire that yearning which Simeon felt to pass away from the vanities and troubles of this life to the true and blessed life in heaven, begging of God to be permitted to depart, and saying with Paul, "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." "Behold how the just man," says S. Ambrose, "as though shut in within the gross prison-house of the body, wishes to be loosed, that he may begin to be with Christ. But he that will be set free, let him come to the Temple, let him come to Jerusalem, let him wait for the Lord, let him embrace Him with good work as with the arms of faith. Then shall he be set free, that he may not see death, because he has looked upon life.

Ver. 30.—*For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* "*Salvation*," in Greek σωτήριον, the word used by the Septuagint as a rendering of the Hebrew ישועה, *iescua*, safety. "Safety" is used by metonomy for "Saviour." By "salvation," then, we are to understand the Saviour Christ, whom the ancient fathers desired to see, but Simeon alone saw, touched, and embraced.

Ver. 31.—*Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people.* That all the nations of the Gentiles may draw salvation from Christ the Saviour. God has not hidden Christ in a corner of Judæa, but

has set Him forth before all men, and soon will announce Him throughout the world by His Apostles, that all who will embrace His faith and law may be saved by Him.

Ver. 32.—*A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.* Thou hast given Christ the Saviour that He may be a light for the enlightenment of the Gentiles, enlightening with His faith and worship the Gentiles who know not the true God, and also to be the glory and honour of the Jewish people. The Arabic has, "the light that hath appeared to the nations." In the same way we have in Ps. cxviii. 18, "Open Thou" (that is, *illumine*) "mine eyes." The allusion here is to the prophecy of Isaiah, made seven hundred years before, in ch. xlii. 6, "I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house;" and in xlix. 6, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." In the Mass, and particularly on the Feast of the Purification, we bless candles, light them, and carry them about, thereby (1) symbolising our belief in Christ as the light of the nations; and (2) praying that He will grant us in this life the light of His grace, and in the other life the light of His gladness and His glory. And it is for this reason that these lighted candles are put into the hands of the dying. See Amalarius, Durandus, and others, who have written on the Offices of the Church.

And the glory of Thy people Israel. 1. Because Christ, promised to *their* forefathers by God, took upon Himself the flesh of *their* race, and was a Jew.

2. Because He lived and died in Judæa, His life being made glorious by His teaching, His holiness, and His miracles.

3. Because He first founded His Church in Judæa, the first believers having been Jews, who afterwards gathered the Gentiles to themselves.

4. It was in Judæa that He rose from the dead and gloriously ascended into heaven, sending down thence the Holy Ghost with the gift of tongues.

The allusion is to Isaiah xlvi. 13, "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel, my glory;" and lx. 1, "The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;" and ibid. 2, "His glory shall be seen upon thee."

Ver. 33.—*And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of Him.* Joseph, who is called the father of Christ, not only because he was His foster-father, and was commonly supposed to be His natural father, but also because Christ had been born to him lawfully in wedlock, and of his wife Mary; and this marriage of Joseph with the Blessed Virgin was made and ordained by God for the sake of this progeny. So say S. Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.* c. 1), Bede, Jansenius, and others.

Marvelled. For, though they knew that Christ was to be the Saviour of Israel, yet they did not know all that the Holy Ghost was here prophesying about Him by Simeon and Anna—that He was to be a light enlightening all nations, that He should be "for the ruin and for the resurrection of many in Israel," that a sword should pierce the soul of the Virgin, &c. Besides, even had they known these things, they would have wondered at their being proclaimed aloud with such enthusiasm and ardour.

Ver. 34.—*And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.* The form for the sacerdotal blessing is prescribed in Num. vi. 24, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee," &c.

Blessed them. That is, Joseph and Mary, not the Child Christ, say Maldonatus, Francis Lucas, and others; for the Child, as his Saviour and his God, he venerated and adored, desiring to be blessed by Him, and not presuming to bless Him. Jansenius, however, thinks that the word "*them*" includes Christ.

And said unto Mary His mother, rather than to Joseph, both because she was the true and natural mother of Jesus, while Joseph was only nominally His father, and also because Joseph seems to have died before the thirtieth year of Christ, when the things here foreshadowed were accomplished, so that the Blessed Mary alone experienced them in herself. To her alone, then, did Simeon here

foretell both the happiness and the adversity which are to befall Christ and her, that in happiness she might not be lifted up too much, nor be cast down in her adversity.

Set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. For *fall* the Greek has πτῶσιν, and so the Arabic. The allusion is to Isa. viii. 14, "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel" (that is), "for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;" and in xxviii. 16, "Behold, I lay in Sion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation;" the latter text is quoted against the unbelieving Jews by S. Paul, Rom. ix. 33, by S. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 6, and Acts iv. 11, and by Christ Himself, Matt. xxi. 42. Christ was laid and placed in the new, that is the Christian Church as a foundation and a corner-stone, that upon Him He might build all those that believed in Him, and of them build up the spiritual edifice of the Church, as He had promised to Adam, Abraham, Moses, and the other patriarchs and prophets. God did this *directly* with the intention of drawing all the Israelites to the faith of Christ, that He might so bring them into His Church and save them; but He *foresaw* that a great part of them would, by reason of their wickedness, speak against Christ when He came, and would strike against Him as on a stone of offence, and that so they would be broken, and fall into ruin both temporal and eternal. Yet He would not change His resolve of sending Christ, but would permit this rebellion and speaking against Him on the part of the Jews in order that it might be the occasion for S. Paul and the Apostles to transfer the preaching of the Gospel from them who resisted it to the Gentiles; and that so, instead of a few Jews, numberless nations might believe in Christ, be *built in* to Him in the Church, and be saved, as S. Paul shows at length in Rom. xi. Such was the design of God by which He set Christ as the corner-stone of the Church, to be *indirectly* "*for the fall*," but *directly* "*for the rising again of many in Israel.*" By *fall* is meant the destruction of the Jews who rebelled against Christ; by rising again, the salvation of those who believe in Him: for they that rebelled against Christ

fell from faith into faithlessness, from the hope of salvation into despair and reprobation, from heaven into hell; but they who believe in Him have risen by his grace from the sins in which they lay prostrate to a new life of virtue and grace, looking for the hope of glory. Such is the interpretation of S. Augustine, Bede, Theophylact, Euthymius, Toletus, and many others; indeed, so Christ Himself, S. Peter, and S. Paul interpret in the places quoted above. S. Gregory of Nyssa also interprets "*ruin*" as the devastation of Judæa and Jerusalem by Titus; for this calamity came upon them because they set at nought and crucified Christ.

Symbolically, Theophylact says that Christ was set "for the ruin and the resurrection of Israel," that is, of the penitent soul that sanctifies itself by the grace of Christ, because this grace brings it to pass that pride, gluttony, and lust fall in the soul, while humility, abstinence, and chastity rise up in it.

And for a sign which shall be spoken against. In Greek εἰς σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον, *a sign of contradiction* or *of contention*, as the Syriac and Arabic render it. Tertullian (*de Carne Christi*, c. xxiii.) renders it "for a contradictory sign."

The question arises, What is this sign?

1. Maldonatus and Francis Lucas say that Christ was set as an archer's target at which the unbelieving Jews and Scribes hurled not only evil words with the tongue, but also maleficent weapons with the hand. This target was one of *contradiction*, because the Scribes strove together and contradicted one another about striking and piercing it. So that Simeon alludes to Lam. iii. 12, "He hath set me as a mark for the arrow, he hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins."

2. S. Basil, Bede, and Theophylact understand the sign of the cross, making it refer to Isa. xi. 10, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign for the people." The Hebrew word translated "sign" is נֵס, *nes*, a *standard*, rendered by the Septuagint σημειον, which is the word here used by Luke. Christ, when lifted up on the Cross, is to be a standard-bearer, and shall raise the banner of the Cross, to which He will draw all the faithful

as His soldiers to fight against Jews, Mohammedans, Pagans, and other impious soldiers of the devil, who contradict the Cross of Christ and fight hard against it. So Toletus interprets.

3. The most obvious interpretation is that Simeon is alluding to Isa. viii. 18, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel." The wondrous, strange, and hitherto unheard of birth of Christ from a virgin is here called a "sign" or "wonder," and His Divine teaching, life, death, resurrection, and miracles, by which He clearly showed Himself to be the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Against this "sign" of Christ not only do Jews and heathens speak with the tongue, but bad Christians also by their wicked lives. So Origen and Jansenius. S. Basil, commenting on "Behold a virgin shall conceive" (Isa. vii.), favours this view. Tertullian also (*De Carne Christi*) makes the allusion to Isa. vii., "Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a son. We recognise, then, the contradictory sign, the conception and child-bearing of the Virgin Mary, of which these academicians say she bore a child and bore no child, she was a virgin and no virgin." And these cavillers he answers, "She bore a child in that she did so of her own flesh; and she did not bear, in that she bore not of the seed of man. And she was a virgin for man, not a virgin for childbirth."

Symbolically, Cajetan says, "Christ was the sign of the reconciliation of the human race with God." And Dionysius, "The sign of the covenant between God and man, that the flood was no more to be brought upon the earth." Others take "sign" as that with which God's sheep are marked: Christians are to be marked with the faith of Christ, His baptism, and His character as a sign, that they may be distinguished from infidels. Baradius thinks that the allusion is to the brazen serpent which Moses set up, for a sign, that those who looked at it might be cured of the serpent's bite, Num. xxi.

Ver. 35.—*Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.* "*Sword*," in the

Arabic version, *lance;* the Greek ῥομφαία means both *sword* and *lance* or *dart.*

What is this sword?

1. Some understand doubt in her faith; that the Blessed Virgin, when she saw Christ suffering so fearfully from the violence of the Jews, and dying on the Cross, doubted as to whether He would rise again, as He had foretold. In this sense speak Origen (*Hom.* xvii.), Titus, Theophylact, and others. This, however, is an error, for such a feeling were unworthy the Deipara, and that she experienced it is counter to the common sense of the Church. For so the Blessed Virgin would have sinned by unbelief. Indeed, the authors cited are sometimes explained as meaning by "doubt," admiration, mental perturbation, and inward questionings.

2. S. Eucherius of Lyons (*Hom. in Dominicam*), understands the sword of the Spirit—the word of God, *i.e.*, the spirit of prophecy, as who should say, The sword of the prophetic spirit shall pass through thy soul, O Mary, to reveal to thee the secrets of Holy Scripture and the hidden thoughts of men, as in Cana of Galilee when thou shalt say, "Whatsoever He telleth you, do it," knowing that Christ will command them to draw the water which He is to turn into wine. So it is that the Apostle says in Heb. iv. 12, "The word of the Lord is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And S. Ambrose understands it of the prudence of the Virgin, who was not without knowledge of heavenly secrets.

3. It has been supposed by some, as Amphilochius (*Hom. De Occurs. Dom.*) bears witness, that the Blessed Virgin really received the crown of martyrdom by the sword, but this is contrary to all belief in history.

4. The true interpretation of "*sword*" here is with reference to the sufferings inflicted on Christ, or rather contradiction spoken of a little before; for the *contradiction* of the tongue is spoken of in Scripture as a sword, as in Ps. lvii. 4, "The sons of men, whose

teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword;" and Ps. lxiv. 3, "Who whet their tongues like a sword;" and Ps. cv. 18, "The sword hath passed through His soul" (Vulg.) This sword, then, is twofold. (1.) The sword of the tongue. For the Blessed Virgin, hearing the insults, calumnies, and blasphemies with which Christ was assailed by the Jews, even when He was crucified, suffered intense tortures, just as though a sword had been struck through her soul. (2.) The sword of iron—the nails and other torments which not only pierced the body and soul of Christ, but also pierced the soul of the Virgin. Just as when a man stabs with a sword at two persons who are next each other so as to kill the one and pierce and wound the other. Such is the interpretation of S. Augustine (*Ep.* 59, *ad Paulinum*), Sophronius (*Hom. de Assumptione*), Francis Lucas, Jansenius, Toletus, Barradius, and others.

How great was the torture inflicted by this sword we may gather, with Toletus, *First*, from the fact that it was her Son Who suffered, whom the Mother of God loved more than herself, so that she would far rather have suffered and been crucified herself. Love is the measure of sorrow. *Secondly*, from the severity of Christ's torments and the wideness of their extent; for He suffered the most fearful agonies in all His senses and all His members, and all this the Blessed Virgin endured also by her sympathy with Him. *Thirdly*, the dignity of the Personage who suffered; for the Blessed Virgin pondered deeply the fact that this was the True God, the Messiah, and Saviour of the World. *Fourthly*, the long duration of His sufferings; for Christ suffered all His life long, until He breathed forth His Soul on the Cross. *Fifthly*, His loneliness; for He suffered alone, deserted by His Apostles and all His friends, by the angels, and by God Himself, so that He cried aloud, "My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" For, though the Blessed Virgin stood by Him and suffered with Him, yet did the Mother's anguish but add a new pang to the Son's torments, and this grief again had its echo in the Mother's soul.

So it is that S. John of Damascus (*de Fide*, lib. iv. cap. xv.) remarks,

"The pains she had escaped in childbirth she bore at the time of His Passion, so that she felt her bosom torn asunder by reason of the depth of her maternal love." It is for this reason that the doctors teach that the Blessed Virgin was a martyr, and more than a martyr. As Christ, in His Passion, was tormented more than all the martyrs, so too was the Blessed Virgin by her sympathy with Him; and by this torment she would have been overcome and would have died had not God preserved her life by His special support. As, therefore, S. John the evangelist, who was put into the vessel of boiling oil, is a martyr, because this suffering would, in the natural course, have resulted in his death, if God had not preserved his life by a miracle, so also is the Blessed Virgin.

It may be objected to this that the Jews did not wish to torture or kill the Blessed Virgin, but only Christ. But, in torturing Christ, they tortured His Virgin Mother, just as he who tortures the body tortures the soul, for she was more closely joined to Christ in feeling than the body to the soul. Besides, the Jews persecuted all the relatives of Christ, as they did His apostles and disciples, out of hatred of Him. S. Bridget (*Serm. Angelic.* cc. xvii., xviii.) gives a pathetic account of the strength of this sword of the Virgin's sorrow.

Symbolically, S. Bernard (*Serm.* xxix.) interprets this sword or dart as love: for where there is sorrow there too is love; in love there is no living without sorrow, nor in sorrow without love. "The chosen arrow," he says, "is the love of Christ, which not only pierced, but pierced through and through, the soul of Mary, so that it left in her virginal breast not the smallest part void of love, but with all her heart, and all her soul, and all her strength, she loved. And truly, again, it penetrated through her to come to us, that of that fulness we might all receive, and she might be the Mother of that love whose father is the love of God. . . . And in her whole self did she receive the vast sweet wound of love. Happy shall I think myself if sometimes I may feel pricked with but the very tip of that sword's point, that my soul too may say, I am wounded with love."

That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. An obscure sentence, and difficult of interpretation.

1. S. Hilary, who by "sword" understands the Day of Judgment, easily settles the difficulty. The sword, he interprets, shall dissect and lay open the hearts of men—even of the Blessed Virgin. This is the force of the words of the Apocalypse about Christ, "And from His mouth there went forth a sharp two-edged sword" (c. i. v. 16).

2. Eucherius, taking "sword" as the spirit of prophecy, interprets that this sword was given to the Blessed Virgin that she might know the secret thoughts of men.

3. Euthymius—Many, seeing the miracles and the wisdom of Jesus, thought within themselves that He had descended from Heaven, and was not the son of Mary; but, when they saw her at the cross of Christ, mourning and in such tribulation, they abandoned this idea, believing that she who felt His sorrows so deeply must be His mother indeed.

4. S. Augustine (*Ep.* 59, near the end)—"By the Lord's Passion both the plots of the Jews and the infirmity of the disciples were made manifest," for they forsook Christ and fled. This is apposite with respect to the Jews, but not so applicable as to the disciples, for the latter did not meditate flight beforehand.

5. Toletus interprets concisely—The sword that shall pierce thy soul, O Virgin, shall be the occasion of revealing the thoughts of many hearts that before lay hidden. For, long before Christ was slain, the leaders of the Jews had the intention of slaying Him, but dared make no attempt against Him, for fear of the people. But then the Jews had already before the Passion made manifest their thoughts about Christ, by cavilling at His words and works, although they concealed their desire to slay Him.

6. The fullest and most obvious explanation is that which makes the "*that*" expressive both of the purpose and its attainment, and refers it both to the sword and the words of the preceding verse, "This child is set for the fall," &c. That is to say, that the Scribes and Pharisees, who, like the heretics of to-day, appeared to be the

upholders of justice and truth, may show the world how antagonistic they are to the true Messiah and to justice, and what evil designs they cherish against Him. For, before the advent of Christ, they were in hopes that He would come with pomp and with wealth, even as Solomon, so that they might be raised by Him in honour and riches; but when they saw Him in His humility and poverty opposing Himself to their ambition and avarice, and publicly rebuking them for it, they set Him at nought and opposed Him, secretly scheming to bring upon Him the destruction which they at length actually compassed. Then was it revealed who in Israel were just, for these loved Christ sincerely and with constancy; and who unjust, for these persecuted and slew Him. So S. Augustine (*Ep.* 59), Bede, Jansenius, Maldonatus, Francis Lucas, and others. The explanation of Toletus also tallies with this to some extent.

Ver. 36.—*And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity.* She was an old woman, so that she was prompted by no youthful fervour, but bore testimony to Christ in a mature and grave manner. "Anna" in Hebrew signifies grace—of which Anna was full. The name "Grace" is still often borne by women, and was the name of her who at Firando, in Japan, generously met a glorious death, together with her four children and her whole household, for the faith of Christ.

A prophetess—that is, a teacher, says Francis Lucas—one who instructed the young women in the law of God and in piety; for at this time the Jews had no prophets who foretold future events. But that Anna foretold the hidden things of the future is clear from v. 38, where she prophesied about Christ. For, though the Jews had no prophets until the time of Christ, yet God raised up prophets at that time, such as John, Zachary, Elizabeth, and Simeon. Hence S. Ambrose says, "The birth of the Lord received testimony not only from the angels, from the shepherds, and from His parents, but also from the aged and good; every age, and both sexes, and the

wondrous nature of events, build up our faith. A virgin conceives —the barren brings forth—the dumb speaks—Elizabeth prophesies, —the wise man adores—he that is shut up in the womb exults—the widow confesses—the just man is waiting for His coming."

The daughter of Phanuel. Phanuel was a well-known man at that time. "Phanuel" in Hebrew signifies "the face of God"—his daughter is "Anna"—grace; for grace proceeds from the face and from the mouth of God, and is breathed into the faithful. The place where Jacob saw God face to face, was called by him Peniel or "Phanuel," Gen. xxxii. 30.

She was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity—that is, from the time when she became of marriageable age; for infants, who have not yet reached this age, are not properly virgins. Again, from the time of her marriage which she contracted as a virgin. They were wont to marry soon after attaining puberty—in their fifteenth year, the age at which the Blessed Virgin was married to Joseph. Hence we gather (1) that Anna was married once, and that in the first years of her puberty; (2) that, before her marriage, she lived chastely; (3) that, when, after seven years of her married life, her husband died, becoming a widow at the early age of twenty-two, she, with remarkable continency, in the flower of her life remained a widow until the age of eighty-four, or, as S. Ambrose interprets, until the eighty-fourth year of her widowhood. If this last interpretation be correct, she must, when she met Christ, have been one hundred and six years old. It seems that God prolonged the life of Anna to this great age with the special design that she might see and bear testimony to Christ, even as He prolonged that of Simeon.

Ver. 37.—*And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years* (of age, or, according to S. Ambrose, of her widowhood), *which departed not from the Temple.* Not that she lived in the Temple, but she frequented it, and spent much time in it. So think Toletus, Jansenius, and Maldonatus. Others, however, think that she actually dwelt in the Temple; for hard by the Temple there were houses of religious women who served God "night and day"—as

there afterwards were of deaconesses in the Christian Church, and still are of nuns. This appears from Exod. xxxviii. 8; 2 Maccabees iii. 20; and 1 Sam. ii. 22. These religious women were some virgins, and some widows, of which latter it seems that Anna was one, as Canisius (*Marialis*, lib. i. xii.) argues.

But served God with fastings and prayers night and day—that is, serving God, as the Arabic renders it. The Greek λατρεύουσα, worshipping with "latria"—latria being due to God only. Hence is plain the falsehood of the teaching of the heretics, that fasting is only a mortification of the body, and no worship of God, except in so far as it is understood to mean prayer; for S. Luke here says that Anna served God *both* with fastings *and* prayers. By means of her fastings and prayers she served God "night and day.' S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 42, *ad pop.*) eloquently commends prayer made by night: "Behold," he says, "the company of the stars, the deep silence, the great calm, and admire the dispensation of thy Lord. For then is the mind purer, lighter, and more subtle, more sublime and agile. The darkness itself and the great silence have the power of inducing compunction. And if thou lookest upon the sky, dotted with numberless stars as with eyes . . . bend thy knees, groan, pray thy Lord to be propitious to thee. He is the more appeased by prayers made in the night, when thou makest the time of rest the time of thy struggles. Remember the King, what words he said: "I am weary of my groaning, every night wash I my bed, and water my couch with my tears." So Christ used to give the day to preaching, the night to prayer, Luke vi. 12. So too S. Paul, Acts xvi. 25, and 2 Tim. i. 3. So S. Anthony, S. Hilarion, and the other anchorites; nay, the Church also, as is plain from the "Nocturns" which monks still chant by night.

Ver. 38.—*And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord.* In Greek ἀνθωμολογεῖτο, confessed to God *in her turn*, as though singing in answer to Simeon from the choir set apart for the other sex, praised the Lord, and gave Him thanks for the gift of Christ and His birth.

And spake of Him—of the Lord Christ, whom she had there present. Not only did Anna praise God, but she began to discourse to others of Jesus, asserting Him to be the Christ, and exhorting all to believe in Him.

To all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. The Redeemer Christ, who redeems from sin, death, Satan, and Hell, Israel, that is, the people of the faithful who believe in Him.

Allegorically, Christ, when born, appeared to three groups of persons in three ways—(1) to the shepherds, at the indication of an angel; (2) to the magi, under the guidance of a star; (3) to Simeon and Anna, guided by the Holy Ghost. Again, the shepherds saw Christ, the Magi adored Him, but Simeon and Anna embraced Him. So we first recognise Christ, then adore Him, and then, when we are no longer children in virtue, but old men, embrace Him with arms of love. So Jansenius teaches.

Ver. 40.—*And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.* And from thence, fearing the Infanticide Herod, they fled, with the Child Jesus, into Egypt. The massacre of the innocents took place, says Euthymius, Toletus, and others, a little after the purification of the Virgin, and about the time of the Passover. S. Augustine, however (*de Consens. Evang.*, lib. ii. cap. v.), Jansenius, and Francis Lucas, think that they fled immediately from Jerusalem, and returning thence nine years after, went back to Nazareth, as S. Luke here says. See Commentary on S. Matt. ii. 13. Moreover, they returned to Nazareth, before their flight, in order to arrange their affairs there, and to prepare what was necessary for the long journey to Egypt. And there was abundance of time for their flight, since the interval between the 2d of February—the date of the Purification and the Passover, when the massacre is said to have taken place—is about two mouths.

Ver. 40.—*And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit.* The Greek, Syriac, and Arabic add "*in spirit*," and Euthymius explains it that Christ did *not* receive greater spiritual strength *inwardly* day by day, since He was full of grace and the Holy Ghost from

the first moment of His conception, but that He exhibited this strength more and more *outwardly* by word and work. The Latin version, the Latin fathers, and the interpreter reject "in spirit," as also Origen and Titus among the Greeks.

Filled with wisdom. The Greek πληρούμενον means both *to be being filled* and *to be full*, so as to be equivalent to πλήρης. The Arabic renders "was being filled again with wisdom," the Syriac "was being filled with wisdom." So also Origen, Theophylact, Euthymius, and Titus on this passage, and S. Ambrose (*de Incarn. Dom. Sact.* cap. vii.) Theophylact explains—Not acquiring wisdom (for what could be more perfect than He who was perfect from the beginning?) but discovering it little by little. For had He manifested all His wisdom whilst he was small in stature, He would have appeared, as it were, monstrous, and as though not really a child, but a phantasm of a child.

And the Grace of God was upon Him. In the Greek ἐπ' αὐτόν. All the favour, goodwill, care, and love of God the Father towards the Child Jesus, as His Son, brooded, as it were, over Him from out of the heavens, to adorn Him with gifts and graces, to guide and dispose Him in all His actions, that all might see that He was ruled, and in all things directed by God, and that His actions were not so much human as Divine. So says Euthymius. In a similar manner it is said of John the Baptist, "And the hand of the Lord was with him," Luke i. 66.

Ver. 41.—*Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.* God had commanded that every man should go to the Tabernacle or Temple three times a year, there to adore God publicly and offer Him sacrifices, Exod. xxiii. 14 and Deut. xvi. 16. The Blessed Virgin, although not bound by the law, still, out of devotion, after her return from Egypt, joined her husband, and brought her son with her to the Temple, that she might teach mothers to bring their children, from their tender years, to the Temple, and to worship God. So say Bede, Maldonatus, Jansenius, Francis Lucas, and others. Nor did she fear Archeläus the son of the Infanticide Herod, both because she thought with good reason that,

in so large a concourse of Jews, they would be able to escape observation for a few days, and also because she knew that God, for whose honour she underwent this risk, had her in His mind and in His keeping. So says S. Augustine (*de Consens. Evang.*, lib. ii. cap. x.), and S. Luke implies as much in the next two verses. Some, however, think, with some probability, that Jesus only went up to Jerusalem in the twelfth year of His age, for in that year Archeläus was exiled by Augustus.

Ver. 42.—*And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.* The Syriac has "*as they had been accustomed on the feast*"—namely, of the Passover.

Ver. 43.—*And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem.* In the Greek, *after they had finished*, or *gone through*, *the days*—namely, of the Passover; for this feast was kept for seven days, and S. Luke here implies that Mary and Joseph kept all these days at Jerusalem, though they were not bound by the law to remain so long—*tarried behind in Jerusalem*, there to shed some little ray of His wisdom and Divinity, as though longing to begin the ministry for which His Father had sent Him. For at the age of twelve childhood ends, and youth and perfect judgment begin. So says Bede.

And Joseph and his mother knew not of it, because Jesus asked leave of His parents, who were lingering a little in Jerusalem from motives of devotion or business, to visit His relations, as if he were about to go on with them, and, having obtained permission, went to them, but soon withdrew quietly to the Temple—God so directing—in order that His parents, though at other times always solicitous about Him, should be unaware of this, and think that He was in the company of His kinsfolk.

Ver. 44.—*But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance*, who had gone on, and with whom Mary and Joseph, who were about to follow a little later, would that evening lodge and, as they thought, there find Jesus.

Ver. 45.—*And when they found him not, they turned back again to*

Jerusalem, seeking Him. Jesus having been seen by none of His kinsfolk on the way, His parents understood that He must have remained in Jerusalem; and so they sought Him there with great anxiety. Origen gives the reason, and Theophylact and Titus follow him. "But did they seek Him so anxiously? Did they imagine that the Child had been lost, or had wandered from the way?" Far otherwise, "For this would not have been characteristic of Mary's wisdom (she knew that Jesus was full of wisdom, yea, that He was God), and they could never have thought that the Child was lost, when they knew that He was Divine, but they sought Him lest by any means He might have gone away from them; lest perchance He had left them;" lest He should wish to remain not with them at Nazareth, but with others in Jerusalem, that He might there make haste to begin the ministry of teaching for which He had been sent by God. Origen adds, "They sought Him, lest perchance He might have gone away from them, lest He might have left them and betaken Himself elsewhere—or as seems most probable—lest He might have returned to heaven, to descend from thence when it should please Him . . . but she mourned because she was a mother, and the mother of a Son worthy of her immeasurable love—because He had departed without her knowledge, and quite contrary to her expectation."

S. Antoninus adds that the mother of Jesus feared lest He might have fallen into the hands of Archeläus, the son of Herod the Infanticide, who would slay Him. Euthymius and Francis Lucas think she feared lest Christ might have wandered from the road, since He did not thoroughly know all the way. For, though He knew its turns and windings by His Divine and infused wisdom, yet, according to the *experimental* knowledge which He, as a child, was following, He did not know it. Whether this be correct I leave to theologians to decide.

Ver. 46.—*And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. After three days*, that is, on the third day. The first day was that on which they left Jerusalem; the

second, that on which, not finding Him at the inn, they returned; and the third, when they sought and found the Holy Child in the Holy Temple. So S. Ambrose, Euthymius, and others. Just as we read in ver. 21, "When the eight days were accomplished"—that is, on the eighth day—Jesus was circumcised. And in S. Mark viii. 31, "The Son of Man must suffer many things . . . after three days (that is, on the third day) to rise again."

In the Temple—For the place of God Incarnate is in the Temple. There is He to be sought, there shall He be found—not in the market-place, not in the tavern, not in the theatre. S. Basil and S. Gregory Nazianzen imitated Christ, for they, according to Ruffinus, when they were studying at Athens, knew but two streets in the city—one led to the church and the other to the school.

The whole of these three days, then, Jesus spent in praying and hearing and answering the doctors in the Temple; His food He received from the doctors, who, being present, and admiring His wisdom, invited Him. Others, with less probability, think that He lived by begging from door to door; such is the opinion of S. Bernard (*Hom. infra Oct. Epiphan.*), Bonaventura, Alensis, and others. S. Thomas, in the Summa, favours this view, proving that Christ did sometimes beg, from the words of Ps. xl. 17, "But I am poor and needy." On the other hand, Nicholas de Lyra, Dionysius the Carthusian, John the Greater, commenting on this passage, and John of Avila, on S. Matt. xvii., hold that Christ never begged, begging having been unlawful among the Jews. "There shall be no poor among you," Deut. xv. 4. However, these words are not a precept, but a promise of riches, if they obey the Law of God.

Sitting in the midst of the doctors. A Hebraism—among the doctors, but in a lowly position like a disciple, in order that He might rouse them to think and inquire about the advent of the Messiah, which was now nigh at hand, because the sceptre had departed from Judah, and the seventy weeks of Daniel and other oracles of the prophets were now fulfilled. It is very probable that Christ questioned the doctors about the coming

of the Messiah, so that His manifestation might not be unexpected, but that, afterwards, when preaching and working miracles, He might the more readily be received by them as the Messiah, from these same indications which now flashed out like sparks upon them.

Asking them questions. (1.) Because it was fitting that the child should ask questions of these learned men, and not teach them. (2.) To teach the young modesty, and the desire to hear, to question, and to learn, "Lest," says Bede, "if they will not be disciples of the truth, they become masters of error." (3.) That, asking them questions, He might be questioned in turn by them, and might teach them by His replies.

Ver. 47.—*And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.* That a child of twelve, the son of a carpenter, one who had never attended the schools, should be so versed in Holy Scripture, should question so wisely and answer so intelligently as to surpass even the doctors themselves, so that they said, "What thinkest thou that this child will be?"—will He be a Prophet? will He be the Messiah, whom we all anxiously expect from day to day to be the Teacher of the World?

Ver. 48.—*And when they saw him, they were amazed.* His parents, who were seeking Him, wondered and rejoiced at finding him alone disputing with the doctors, manifesting such wisdom, while the doctors, and all the rest who were present, wondered at Him.

And His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing—the Arabic adds, "with labour." Such are the words of His mother, not as finding fault with Christ, but in wonder and in sorrow, and sorrowfully unfolding her grief. The reverence felt by this mother for her Child—the God-Man—assures us of this; so it is most likely that she said this to Him, not publicly in the assemblage of doctors, but privately, calling Him aside, or when the assembly had dispersed. So Jansenius, Maldonatus, and others.

Thy father and I. S. Augustine (*Serm.* 63 *De Diversis*, xi.) remarks upon the humility of the Virgin, who, knowing that she

was in every sense (in solidum) the Mother of Christ, and, therefore, of God, and that Joseph had no part in begetting Him, yet modestly puts herself after Joseph as her husband. "She expresses herself always," says an anonymous writer in the "Catena Græca," like a mother, with trustfulness, humility, and affection."

Tropologically, let the soul that has separated itself from Jesus by mortal sin, or from its wonted communion with Him by venial negligence, seek Him again (1) with the sorrow and tears of a penitent heart, for, as S. Gregory Nazianzen says (*Orat.* 3), "The tears of righteous men" (and of sinful too, if they repent) "are the flood that covers sin, and the expiation of the world, as was Noah's flood; (2) with earnestness and solicitude, as the Blessed Virgin did, and that in the Temple, by passing some time in prayer and in spiritual reading and meditation; (3) among the doctors, among learned and good men, who shall instruct the soul as well in knowledge as in piety.

Ver. 49.—*And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* S. Ambrose holds that these are the words of one administering reproof. And Christ, as the Messiah, and as a Lawgiver, might rightfully have reproved His mother had she sinned. But there was no blemish of sin in His mother, neither therefore was there any reproof on the part of Christ. Still, there is in the words a certain sharpness of tone, savouring of reproof, that He may teach them by His question and incite them the more keenly to learn the things that concerned Him, just as parents are wont to stimulate their children to zeal and diligence with sharp words, and masters their pupils. These words of Christ, then, are the words of one instructing and consoling; excusing himself, and defending what he has done:—There was no need for you to seek Me, for you might have considered that I was treating concerning the beginning of that business, the salvation of the world, for which My Father sent Me. Neither must you suppose that I shall always remain with you; some day I shall leave you and go away about this business, as I have already begun to do. And, as for My going without your knowledge, I did so purposely, to teach you that, in these matters, I depend not on you, but on

My Heavenly Father, and that I must act according to His will and His plan. It is not I, then, who have given you cause for sorrow, but partly your love for Me and partly your ignorance of the mystery I have now told you of; you knew not that I was occupied with My Father's affairs. For, though this ought to have presented itself to your mind, your tender love prevented it, and turned aside the thought. Hence Bede says, "He blames her not because she sought Him as her son, but forces her to raise the eyes of her mind to what He owes Him whose Eternal Son He is."

In order to understand this thoroughly we must notice that Christ, besides His *Divine* actions, which He had as God and the Son of God, such as creating, preserving, and ruling all things, and breathing the Holy Spirit, had *human* actions of two kinds. Of these He had some as man, common to Him with other men, eating, walking, labouring, &c.; others were proper to Him as the God-Man, the Redeemer, the Christ, and these actions are called by S. Dionysius "Theandric" (Θέος ἀνηρ), being the works partly of God and partly of a man. Such actions were those of teaching, working miracles, calling His disciples, creating and ordaining apostles, &c.

In respect of the former class of actions Christ was willing to obey His parents; but as to the latter He would obey only God His Father, because these, as being of a higher order, were received by and were under the direction of God alone. Wherefore He answered His parents, when they sought an explanation of His conduct, that these things were to be done, not at their will and pleasure, but at God's—as appears from this passage, and at the marriage at Cana, in the turning of the water into wine, S. John ii. 4, and in other similar cases.

And these actions which Christ did as the God-Man He calls the actions of God His Father, and attributes to His Father, not to Himself (1) because on account of these works He was sent by His Father into the world; (2) because He had His Divinity from the Father, and these were the works chiefly of His Divinity; (3) because He did them by the Father's command; (4) because in these matters He was subject to no one but His Eternal Father,

to teach us that God's command or counsel must come before even the tenderest love for a mother—as when God calls any one to religion, to the priesthood, to martyrdom, or to the apostolate, and his parents are opposed to the call.

Ver. 50.—*And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them.* Some make these words refer to the ignorance of those who stood by, who were astonished at the wisdom and the answers of Jesus—others to Joseph alone by a synecdoche. But they clearly refer both to the Blessed Virgin and Joseph; for, though they knew that their Jesus was Christ, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, still they did not understand in what manner He was going to set about the work of this His office, or what was that business of His Father which He had said that it behoved Him to be about—that is to say, whether, or when, or how He was going to teach, to live, to die, and to be crucified for the salvation of the world; for these things had not yet been revealed to them by God. However, they learnt all this in progress of time, either by experience or by revelation from Jesus. And, out of reverence for Him, they durst not ask Him curiously in this place what those mysteries were, but prudently awaited the fitting opportunity.

Ver. 51.—*And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and was subject unto them.* He "came to Nazareth" of His own accord, notwithstanding that S. Bernard says (*Serm.* 19 *in Cant.*), "Having remained in Jerusalem, and having told them that He must needs be engaged in what belonged to His Father, He yet did not disdain to follow them to Nazareth—the Master—the disciples—God—Men, the Word and Wisdom,—a carpenter and a woman."

Subject. In the Greek ὑποκείμενος, *obedient*, that is, as regards His *human* nature, not as regards His *Divine* nature, as S. Augustine shows, in opposition to the Arians (*Contra Maximinum*, lib. iii. cap. xviii.)

Observe that the human nature in Christ, though considered in itself, it was under the rule of His mother, yet, being elevated by God to the Person [Hypostasis] of the Word, and being, therefore,

one with God—one Divine Person—was, for this reason, exempt from the obligation of obedience to His mother as much as from that of obedience to the laws of Augustus and all other worldly authorities. Just as a member of a religious order, if he be made Pope, is exempted from the obedience of his order, and, indeed, becomes its superior. Yet Christ, to give us an example of profound humility and perfect obedience, made Himself subject to His mother, and to Joseph too.

Let children learn, says S. Augustine (*Serm.* 63 *De Diversis*), to be subordinate to their parents, because the world is subject to Christ, and yet Christ was subject to His parents. And S. Bernard (Serm. 1 on the text "missus est") exclaims, "He was subject to them. Who? To whom? God to men, not only to Mary, but also to Joseph. On both sides an astounding thing! On both sides a marvel! both that God obeys a woman—humility without example! and that a woman rules over God—exaltation without a parallel! . . . Blush, proud dust and ashes (*cinis*)! God humbles Himself, and dost thou lift thyself up? . . . As often as I desire to rule over men so often do I strive to surpass my God."

Christ wished to teach us by the whole of His early life, for thirty years without cessation, that the perfection of virtue, and especially of religious life, consists in obedience. He did and said many things in these thirty years, but S. Luke sums them all up in the sentence, "He was subject to them." Glorious panegyric of a religious man! All His life He was obedient and subject to His superiors.

It is the opinion of the old writers that Christ assisted Joseph in his trade as a carpenter. For it was fitting that He, who, together with His true Father, is the Artificer of the Universe, should practise with His supposed father the trade of an artificer.

These scanty facts only does S. Luke recount of the youth of Christ until His thirtieth year; and during the whole of this time He lived privately and unknown. The statements from the apocryphal book, called "The Infancy of the Saviour," and other books of the same kind, the Church rejects.

S. Justin (*Dial. contra Tryphonem*) says that Christ used to make ploughs, yokes, &c., and that for this reason He often took them as figures of speech in the Gospel, as, "Take My yoke upon you," and "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Lyranus, Jansenius, Maldonatus, Dionysius the Carthusian, and John of Avila are of the same opinion, as also Cajetan, and Francis Lucas (on S. Mark vi. 3); but Paulus Burgensis, Baradius, and Simon de Cassia (book iv. ch. 3) deny that Christ worked as a carpenter, and hold that He lived a retired life like a religious until His thirtieth year, passing His time in prayer, contemplation, and fasting. To the objection that the Nazarenes, who were neighbours of Jesus, asked, "Is not this the carpenter?" they find an answer in S. Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.*, l. ii. c. xlii.), "They thought Him a carpenter because He was a carpenter's son," S. Matt. xiii. 55. But since the Nazarenes saw Jesus every day, and studiously watched what He did, they seem likely to have called Him a carpenter from His occupation. Otherwise, indeed, had they seen Him idle, they would have taxed Him with idleness, for not succouring the poverty of His parents by His labour, and helping His father Joseph in his work.

Besides Christ wished by this labour to give an example to working-men. So S. Paul was a tent-maker, even when he preached, as appears from Acts xviii. 3.

But His mother kept all these sayings in her heart—that, in course of time, she might the more fully understand all that Christ should say and do, and also that she might impart them to S. Luke and the other Apostles, to be written or handed down to posterity. "For although," says Titus, "she did not perfectly follow all that was said by Him, yet she understood them to be Divine things, and above human understanding. She heard Jesus, not as a child of twelve years, but received and heeded His words as those of a man perfect in every way." Or, as Euthymius says, "as the words not merely of a child, but also of the Son of God."

Ver. 52.—*And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in*

favour with God and man. For *stature* the Greek has ἡλικία, "*age*," or "*proficiency*." See also chap. xii. 25. Both renderings are true and apposite.

To the question whether Jesus really progressed in wisdom and grace, as He did in age and stature, S. Athanasius (*Serm.* 4 *Contra Arianos*) and S. Cyril (*Thesaurus*, l. x.) seem to answer in the affirmative; for they seem to say that the humanity of Christ drew greater wisdom from the Word by degrees, just as the Blessed Virgin and other men and women did.

But the rest of the fathers teach differently. For, from the first instant of His conception, Jesus was, as has been said at v. 40, full of wisdom and grace, this being due to that humanity on account of its hypostatic union with the Word. S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* 20 *in laudem Basilii*) says, "He progressed in wisdom before God and men, not that He received any increase, since He was, from the beginning, absolute in grace and wisdom, but these gradually became apparent to men [hitherto] unaware of them." For, as Theophylact says, "the shining forth of His wisdom is this very progress;" just as the sun, though it always gives the same degree of light, yet is said to increase in light as it unfolds it more and more from morning until midday. It is to be noted that there were in the soul of Christ three kinds of knowledge—(1) *beatific*, by which He saw God, and all things in God, and so was rendered blessed; (2) knowledge *infused* by God; (3) *experimental* knowledge guided by daily use. The two former were implanted in Christ in so perfect a degree from the first moment of His conception that He could not increase them. I assert the same with respect to His habitual grace and glory. So say S. Augustine (*De peccat. mor. et rem.*, l. iii. c. xxix.), S. Jerome (on the words of Jer. xxxi. 22, "A woman shall compass a man"), S. Athanasius, Cyril, S. Gregory Nazianzen, Bede, and others, S. Thomas and the schoolmen everywhere—for this is required by the hypostatic union.

Christ, therefore, is said to have progressed in wisdom and grace as He progressed in years—1. In the estimation of men, and in

outward seeming. For sometimes Scripture speaks according to what is seen outwardly, and the judgment formed by men. So Origen, Theophylact, Nazianzen, S. Athanasius, and Cyril.

2. Christ did really increase in *experimental* wisdom, for from mere use He acquired experience—"He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" Heb. v. 8.

3. Though Christ did not increase in habitual, yet He did increase in actual and practical wisdom and grace. For, even while yet a child, He daily exerted more and more of the strength of mind and heavenly wisdom that lay hidden in His soul; so that in face and manner, in word and deed, He ever acted with greater and greater modesty, gravity, prudence, sweetness, and piety.

To the objection that Christ is said to have increased in grace *before God*, S. Thomas (p. iii. Quæst. vii.), answers that Christ increased in grace in Himself, not as regards the habit, but as regards the acts and effects produced by it.

Among other differences between the grace which Christ had, and that which we have, there are the four following:—

1. Christ had grace, as it were, naturally by virtue both of the hypostatic union and of His conception of the Holy Ghost; but with us all grace is undue, gratuitous, adventitious, and supernatural.

2. In us grace (1) wipes out original sin, and whatever actual sins there may be, and so (2) makes us pleasing to God; but in Christ grace existed not only previously to sin, but actually without it, sanctifying Him *per Se primo*, for from the grace of the union with the Word emanated habitual grace, as rays from the sun, immediately and naturally. So that we are adopted and are called sons of God, but Christ is truly and naturally the Son of God, as S. Hilary (*De Trinit.*, l. xii.), and Cyril (*In Joannem*, l. iii. c. xii.), teach.

3. In us grace is peculiar to the individual, justifying the man in whom it resides; but the grace of Christ is the grace of the Head, and so sanctifying us. For "of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace" S. John i. 16.

4. Grace increases in us (even in the case of the Blessed Virgin) by good works; but in Christ it did not increase, because, proceeding from the union with the Word, which from the beginning was full and perfect, this fulness of grace, which could not be increased, was given Him at the moment of that union.

Tropologically, Damascene (*De fide*, l. iii. c. xxii.) says that Christ progresses in wisdom and grace, not in Himself, but in His members, that is, in Christians. For He went on producing greater acts of virtue day by day that He might teach us to do the same. All our life is without ceasing either a progress or a falling off; when it is not becoming better it is becoming worse, as S. Bernard tells us. Ep. 25.

With God and man. "For," says Theophylact, "it behoves us to please God first and then man." If we please God He will make us pleasing to men. It is not enough to please man, for this is often false and feigned, nor to please God only, for this is peculiar to oneself and unseen, but we must please "God and man," that we may show to men that grace by which we are pleasing to God, and so attract them to it. "To God," says S. Bernard, "we owe our conscience, to our neighbours our good reputation."

CHAPTER III.

1 *The preaching and baptism of John.* 15 *His testimony of Christ.* 20 *Herod imprisoneth John.* 21 *Christ baptized, receiveth testimony from heaven.* 23 *The age, and genealogy of Christ from Joseph upwards.*

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways *shall be* made smooth;

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water; but

one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

17 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli,

24 Which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Janna, which was *the son* of Joseph,

25 Which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Naum, which was *the son* of Esli, which was *the son* of Nagge,

26 Which was *the son* of Maath, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Semei, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Juda,

27 Which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the son* of Rhesa, which was *the son* of Zorobabel, which was *the son* of Salathiel, which was *the son* of Neri,

28 Which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Addi, which was *the son* of Cosam, which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the son* of Er,

29 Which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the son* of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi,

30 Which was *the son* of Simeon, which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim,

31 Which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of Nathan, which was *the son* of David,

32 Which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson,

33 Which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Juda,

34 Which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, which was *the son* of Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor,

35 Which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala,

36 Which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, which was *the son* of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech,

37 Which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan,

38 Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

Ver. 1.—*Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch*

of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Ver. 2.—*Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.*

S. Luke passes from the twelfth year of Christ to His thirtieth, when, after the manner of the Hebrews, He began to discharge His Office of Teacher and Redeemer and to preach publicly.

In the fifteenth year. Augustus reigned for fifty-seven years from the death of Julius Cæsar, and died on the 19th of August; so that the last year of Augustus was not a complete year, and, consequently, the first of Tiberius only consisted of five months, from August to January, from which the Romans began the year. This Tiberius, having heard wonderful things through Pilate of the miracles and the sanctity of Christ, wished to place Him among the gods, but the senate opposed him, because he had attempted to do it without consulting them (see Commentary on S. Matt. xxvii. 24).

Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa. Archeläus, son of the Infanticide Herod, was exiled by Augustus for his tyrannical conduct in the tenth year of his tetrarchy, supposed to be the fifty-second of Augustus and the twelfth of the life of Christ. Augustus then joined Judæa (that is, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin) to the province of Syria, the governor of which was at the time Quirinus, or, as S. Luke calls him, Cyrenius, who committed the administration of Judæa to Coponius. Hence the governors of Judæa were called procurators or administrators, though they were really governors. Pilate is here called ἡγεμονεύων, *ruler* or *chief;* and the Arabic has "in the dominion over Judæa of Pontius Pilate." Pilate was the fifth procurator of Judæa in succession from Coponius; he ruled nine years, in the second of which Christ was baptized, and in the fifth was crucified by him. By the vengeance of God Pilate was exiled by Augustus in the twenty-third year of the reign of the latter.

Herod being tetrarch of Galilee. In the Arabic, "In the dominion of Herod the ruler over the fourth of Galilee, and of Philip, his

brother, over the fourth of Ituræa." A tetrarch is one who governs the fourth part of a province or kingdom; called by Theodoret a "Quadruplaris."

Herod the Infanticide, dying five days after the massacre of the innocents, in the second year of Christ, left three sons, Archeläus, Herod Antipas, and Philip (for he had put the rest to death—one of them, Antipater, at the very time of the massacre of the innocents). These striving together about the succession of their father, Augustus divided the kingdom into four parts, or tetrarchies; he gave Judæa to Archeläus (and after his expulsion to Coponius), Galilee to Herod Antipas, Ituræa and Trachonitis to Philip, and Abilene to Lysanias, a foreigner. These tetrarchies were of great size, and like kingdoms, as Pliny tells us (bk. v. 18); and so Herod Antipas, although he is called a tetrarch by S. Matthew (xiv. 1), is called a king by S. Mark (vi. 14). Indeed Herod Agrippa, father and son, the nephew and grand-nephew of Herod Antipas, being son and grandson of his brother Aristobulus, obtained from Caligula and from Claudius the title of king, as appears from Acts xii. 1 and xxv. 24.

And his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and the region of Trachonitis. Ituræa, so called from Iethur or Ithur, the son of Ishmael, is a mountainous and woody district stretching along the base of the Lebanon. Trachon, or Trachonitis, says Pliny (bk. v. ch. 18), is a region beyond Jordan, between Palestine and Cœlesyria, bounded on the east by the Arabian desert, and on the north by Damascus; it was inhabited by half the tribe of Manasseh.

And Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene. Bede and Adrichomius think that this Lysanias was a fourth son of Herod the Infanticide. But Josephus says that he was the son of another Lysanias, who was the elder son of Ptolemy Minnæus, who ruled in Chalcis close by Mount Lebanon, and that he succeeded him in his kingdom before Herod the Infanticide had been made king of Judæa by the Romans. The elder Lysanias was slain by Antony, the colleague of Augustus and Lepidus in the Triumvirate, at the instigation of Cleopatra, who was scheming to add his kingdom to her own ancestral kingdom of Egypt. This happened thirty years before the birth of Christ.

Lysanias the younger tried to reinstate Antigonus in the kingdom of Judæa, to the exclusion of Hyrcanus, whom Herod the Infanticide supported; for this reason Herod was created King of Judæa by the Roman Senate at the instance of Antony and Augustus, both Hyrcanus and Antigonus being excluded, as Josephus relates in bk. i. ch. 11. of his "War;" and the same author, in bk. xix. ch. 4 of his "Antiquities," asserts that all that region was called Lysania after Lysanias.

Abilene, Abila, Abyla, or *Abela,* is a celebrated town of Cœlesyria situated by Mount Lebanon, and from it the region of Abilene, or Abilina, takes its name. Abilene borders on Damascus towards the east, Chalcis on the west, and the Lebanon on the south.

S. Luke is at great pains to enumerate here the chief personages, both secular and ecclesiastic:—

(1.) To mark distinctly and palpably the time and year when John, and then Christ, began to preach.

(2.) To shew that the sceptre had now passed from Judah, because Herod and his sons the tetrarchs, and Tiberias and the Romans had become the rulers of Judæa, and that therefore the Messiah, the beginning of whose preaching he relates in this chapter, had come, according to the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10.

(3.) To give us to understand that Israel, torn in sunder among so many rulers; some infidels, others impious men, had need of the advent of the Messiah, Who should make the people whole and save them.

(4.) Because these personages had much to do with those works of John and of Christ which S. Luke will afterwards relate. Tiberius, as I have said, wished to number Christ among the gods; Pilate crucified Him; Herod Antipas seized upon Herodias the wife of his brother Philip, and being reproved by John, slew him; and he clothed Christ in a white dress and mocked Him; while Annas and Caiaphas persecuted Christ to death, and also persecuted the Apostles after His death.

Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests. There was but one high priest of the Jews, as appears from Josephus and others; why then are there two mentioned here? My answer is that Caiaphas

was the high priest, but there were many chief, or leading priests, as is clear from Matt. xxvi. 3, and the *chief priests* are repeatedly mentioned in the Passion of Christ, as accusing Him before Pilate, condemning Him, mocking Him, but the most prominent of them were Caiaphas and Annas, the former as being high priest, the latter as father-in-law of Caiaphas, and as having been high priest, and having great influence among the Jews; indeed, Annas had five sons who were high priests after him (Josephus, "Antiquities," bk. xx. ch. 8).

The word (that is, *the command*) *of God came unto John the son of Zacharias.* In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, God ordered John the Baptist to preach and baptize; ordered him by an interior inspiration, perhaps too by the voice of an angel.

Ver. 3.—*And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance* (*i.e.*, stirring them up to do penance) *for the remission of sins*—to be obtained in the baptism of Christ. John was preaching penance, that by it they might dispose themselves for the reception of pardon and grace from Christ. See Matt. iii.

Ver. 4.—*As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.*

Ver. 5.—*Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.* S. Gregory (*Hom.* xx. *In Evangelia*), S. Augustine, S. Chrysostom, Bede, and others interpret these words as meaning, Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, as Christ said. This, however, is a discourse in which John exhorts his hearers to a change of life and conversation, as though he said, O ye Jews, prepare the way for Christ, your Messiah, now about to come to you. Wherefore, "Every valley shall be filled," *i.e.*, let it be filled up, "and every mountain and hill shall be brought low," *i.e.*, let it be brought low, "and the crooked," *i.e.*, difficult ways, "shall be," *i.e.*, let them be made, "into straight," &c. In other words, smooth all the ways for Christ, your King. Who cometh, as is wont to be

done for kings that are about to enter upon their kingdoms, so that the rough ways be made smooth and level. Remove from your minds all that is evil, distorted, or unequal; too much lifted up, or too much cast down; he that beareth in his heart the mountain of pride, let him bring down this swelling, and he that hath in him the valley of pusillanimity or sloth, let him lift and fill it up with generosity and confidence in God; and he that is of "rough" behaviour, let him train himself to suavity and modesty.

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God—i.e., so shall it come to pass that every man shall be able to see both with the eyes of the body, and also more especially with those of the soul, "the salvation of God"—the Saviour Christ—feel and experience within himself the salvation and the power of the grace brought by Christ.

S. Gregory (*Hom.* 20 *In Evang.*) says, "Every valley shall be filled up, because the humble receive a gift which the hearts of them that are puffed up repel from them. The bad places are made straight when the hearts of the wicked, turned awry by iniquity, are directed by the rule of justice; and the rough places are turned into smooth ways when haughty and angry minds return to the gentleness of meekness by the infusion of heavenly grace."

The verses from 7 to 10 have been explained in the Commentary on S. Matthew iii. 7.

Ver. 10.—*And the people asked Him, saying, What shall we do then?* that we may bear fruits worthy of penance, and so avoid the ruin threatened by you, and obtain everlasting salvation. John had accused the Pharisees and the populace, but the Pharisees "despised the counsel of God," c. vii. 30, and therefore also the discourse of John; but the crowd of common people, deeply moved and touched by the force of his preaching, try to find out the way to repent, so as to seize upon John's instructions, and offer themselves to him ready and prepared. So also, in these days, the common people were more ready than the great to take hold of the warnings of preachers, and are therefore saved rather than they.

Ver. 11.—*He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him*

do likewise. A synecdoche; he signifies every kind of alms-deed by one which is the more common and necessary; clothing and feeding the poor. "*Two*," supposing one coat to be sufficient to clothe and warm the body, and the other, therefore, superfluous, let him give that other "to him that hath not," to him that is naked and in need of a coat. For if both be necessary he is not bound to give either to the poor man. So S. Jerome (*Quæst. I. ad Hedibiam*); and S. Ambrose, on this passage, says, "The limits of mercy are observed according to the capability of human nature, so that each one deprive not himself of everything, but share what he has with the poor man," and he adds, "He that is able, let him bear the fruit of grace, he that is bound, of penance. The use of mercy is common, therefore the precept is common; mercy is the fulness of the virtues."

This, then, is one of the fruits worthy of penance, according to the words of Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, "Break off thy sins by righteousness and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor" iv. 27. Besides, almsgiving fitly disposes our lives for every virtue. Every virtue is either of obligation or of supererogation; justice is of obligation, mercy of supererogation, and therefore mercy satisfies both for itself and for justice, both because he that gives what is his own, will not seize what belongs to others, and also because he that gives what he is not bound to give will much more pay what he owes—to which he is bound by justice or some other virtue—and again because mercy comes of love and charity, and charity is the fulness of the law. For "He that loveth hath fulfilled the law," Rom. xiii.

Euthymius aptly remarks here, "He enjoins on the multitudes to take one another into mutual benevolence, and assist one another with mutual good works." For the many easily understand works of mercy, and devote themselves to them, while they are not easily induced to prayer, fasting, and works of penance, and sometimes are incapable of them.

Ver. 12.—*Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?*—to save our souls. Here is fulfilled the saying of Christ, "Publicans and harlots shall be before you (O Scribes) in the kingdom of God," Matt. xxi. 31. For the

sinners, being called to account by John, felt deep compunction, acknowledged their fault, and sought for penance; but the proud Scribes, thinking themselves just and wise, despised it.

Ver. 13.—*And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you*—in the exaction of taxes. In the Greek it is πράσσετε, which can be translated both *make* and *exact*, but in this place is more clearly rendered *exact* as the Syriac and the Greek render it. So Jansenius, Maldonatus, Francis Lucas, and others. For tax-gatherers are wont to increase the tribute out of avarice, and to exact more than is appointed by the Ruler, which is theft or rapine, wherefore John here charges them with it. "He lays a moderate command on them," says S. Augustine (*Serm.* 3 *de Diversis*), "that both iniquity may have no place, and the appointed tribute may have effect." "So the Baptist," says S. Ambrose, "gives to each generation of men the answer suitable to them." Let the preacher do the same, and prescribe to wives, to husbands, to sons, to maidservants, to menservants, to merchants, farmers, and lawyers, what each in particular ought to do, and give each one the directions proper to his state of life."

Ver. 14.—*And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.* Soldiers who were serving some of them under Herod Antipas against Aretas, the king of the Arabs, some under the prefect of the Temple, and some under Pilate, the Roman Governor; these men, hearing John thundering against their vices, and threatening them with hell, conscious of rapine and other crimes, which soldiers are wont to commit, becoming, together with the publicans, contrite, at the word of John, seek from him the remedy of penance, of a good life, and of salvation. John, therefore, tacitly gives it to be understood that it is lawful to be a soldier, and that war is lawful, as S. Ambrose teaches (*Serm.* 7), and S. Augustine (*Contra Faustum*, bk. xxii. ch. lxxiv.)

Ver. 15.—*And as the people were in expectation* (in the Greek προσδοκῶντες, suspecting, expecting, as Vatablus renders it—when

the people were hoping, or were in suspense with hope, desire, and expectation), *and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not*—the Messiah promised to the fathers, and so eagerly expected by all the Jews at this particular time when the sceptre had passed from Judah, and Daniel's seventy weeks, the sign of Christ's coming, were fulfilled. As the people, then, were spreading this report about John, the chief men of the Jews at length sent messengers to him to ask him whether he were Christ (John i. 19). Such was the holiness of John. So S. Ambrose, Bede, and others explain.

Ver. 16.—*John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh*—namely, the Messias.

The rest which Luke here adds has been explained on Matt. iii. 11.

Morally, Origen says, "Preachers are here warned not to allow themselves to be too much praised or honoured by the people, but to suppress these praises and honours, and refer them to Christ, lest by reason of their pride they be deprived of them by Christ.

Ver. 23.—*And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years old.* "Beginning" refers not to "thirty years," for then "about" would be redundant, but to the public preaching of Jesus, for which He was sent by the Father. Having been declared in His baptism the Messiah, the Teacher, Lawgiver, and Saviour of the world by the Dove and by the voice of the Father, and when He was therefore beginning to exercise this His function, and to teach the Gospel law and preach publicly, Jesus "was about thirty years old." This is plain from the Greek, which has, "And Jesus was about thirty years beginning," *i.e.*, when He began to preach. So Jansenius, Baronius, and others.

Observe the "*about;*" he does not state definitely whether Jesus was exactly thirty. If we suppose Him to have been born in the forty-second year of Augustus, Jesus was, in this year of His baptism—the fifteenth of Tiberius—completing His twenty-ninth year and beginning His thirtieth. But if He were born in the forty-first of Augustus He was now completing His thirtieth year.

Thirty years. John, and a little after him, Christ, began to preach not too soon, but at a proper age. The Hebrews have the tradition that no one was allowed to teach publicly before his thirtieth year, for at that age a man is in his full vigour, and his judgment fully matured and perfected. This we also gather from 1 Chron. xxiii. 3.

As was supposed, the son of Joseph, which was (here, and before each of the following names the Arabic puts in "the son") *of Heli, which was of Mathat.* From this passage Porphyry and Julian the Apostate accused Luke of being incorrect, because Joseph was not the son of Heli, but of Jacob, as S. Matthew says (ch. i.); and because S. Luke gives the other progenitors of Joseph and Heli names entirely different from those given them by S. Matthew.

Besides, Jesus was not the son of Joseph, but born of the Virgin Mary.

The solution given by some to this difficulty is that Joseph was by nature the son of Jacob, but by law the son of Heli. By the old law (Deut. xxv. 5) a surviving brother had to raise up seed to his dead brother, and the brother who had died childless was held to be the legal father of these sons. Now Jesca, says Euthymius, married Mathat, and by him had Heli, then she married Mathan, and by him had Jacob. Heli died without issue, and his brother Jacob married his wife in accordance with the law, and Joseph was his son by her, being, therefore, *naturally* the son of Jacob, but *legally* of Heli. So Justinus, S. Jerome, Eusebius, Nazianzen, and S. Ambrose explain it. But, on the other hand, Heli and Jacob were only uterine brothers, and the law on the subject of raising up seed to a brother only applies to full brothers, sons of the same father; for they alone kept the name and heritage of the father, Besides, the introduction of Jesca is beside the point. For though her sons, Heli and Jacob, be connected through her, yet they would have no connection through Mathat and Mathan and the rest of their ancestors up to David.

This, therefore, has nothing to do with the pedigree of the Blessed Virgin and Christ, in so far as showing Jesus to be of the seed of David according to the flesh is concerned. For if Jesus be

descended from Jesca and Mathat, He could not be also descended from Jesca and Mathan; how, then, is He set down as the descendant of both Mathan and Mathat?

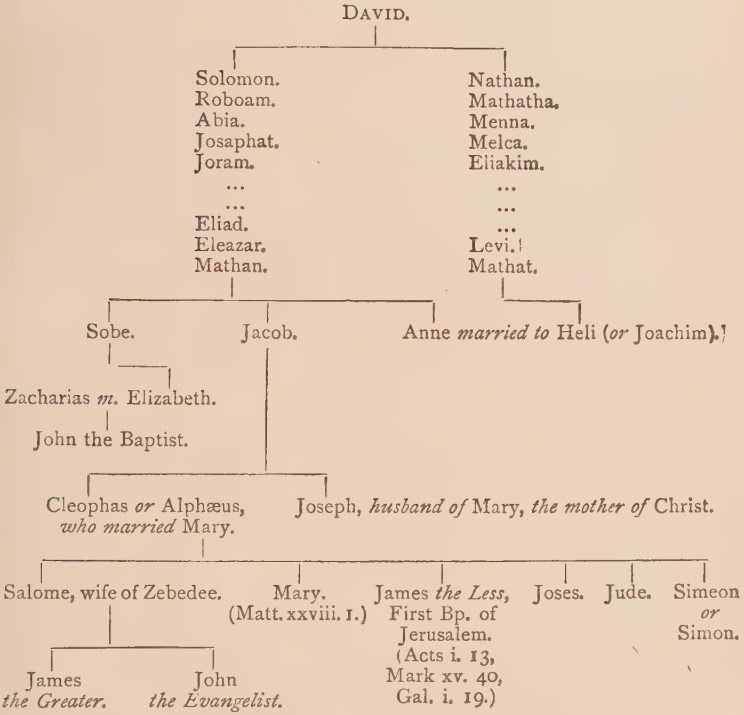
My opinion is that in the time of Christ it was very well known that Mathan was the common grandfather of Joseph and the Blessed Virgin; and that Jacob, the father of Joseph, and Heli, or Joachim, the father of the Blessed Virgin, were full brothers—as Francis Lucas holds—or rather, that Jacob was the brother of S. Anne, the wife of Heli, or Joachim, and mother of the Blessed Virgin; hence the genealogy of one is the genealogy of the other. For the Blessed Virgin was descended, through her mother, from Jacob, Mathan, and Solomon, and, through her father, Joachim or Heli, from Mathat and Nathan.

So S. Matthew gives the genealogy of the Blessed Virgin through her mother S. Anne, while S. Luke gives it through her father Heli, or Joachim, so that Christ may be shown to be descended of the seed of David in both ways.

There is no other better way than this of reconciling the genealogies given by SS. Matthew and Luke. Moreover, it is the common opinion of S. Augustine, Denis the Carthusian, Cajetan, Jansenius, and other doctors whom Suarez quotes (pt. iii., quæst. xxvii. a. 1, disp. 3, sect. 2) that S. Luke traces the genealogy of Christ through Heli, or Joachim, the father of the Blessed Virgin. Hence it must follow that S. Matthew's genealogy is traced through S. Anne, and that she was the daughter of Mathan; for otherwise all her ancestors, whom S. Matthew recounts, belong only to Joseph, and not to the Blessed Virgin and Christ.

S. Matthew then traces Christ's descent through His father Joseph, S. Luke through His mother, the Blessed Virgin; both lines are united in David, but after him separate through his two sons Solomon and Nathan. And again these two lines of Nathan and of Solomon unite in S. Anne, the daughter of Mathan, and sister of Jacob, Joseph's father.

GENEALOGY OF CHRIST, ACCORDING TO SS. MATTHEW AND LUKE.



Who was of Heli. The "*who*" may refer to Joseph, thus—Joseph was the son, *i.e.*, son-in-law of Heli (or Joachim), because he married his daughter, the Blessed Virgin, and therefore Luke does not use the verb "begat" as S. Matthew does, but the verb "was" (*fuit*). And again the pronoun "who" may in the Greek clearly be taken with "Jesus"—Jesus was the son, *i.e.*, the grandson of Heli, or Joachim, because He was his offspring, as from a grandfather, through the Blessed Virgin. For having premised that Joseph was not the real, but only the supposed, father of Christ, there was no reason why S. Luke should immediately subjoin the genealogy of Joseph. But rather S. Luke, as well as S. Matthew, means to describe

the descent of the Blessed Virgin and Christ according to the flesh, and this is the end and aim of each genealogy—so says S. Augustine (or whoever is the author of the *Quæst. veteris et novi Testamenti*, bk. i. q. lvi., and bk. ii. q. vi).

Ver. 24.—*Which was the son of Janna*—Janneus, the second Hyrcanus, if we are to believe Annius and Philo, who was the last leader of the Jews of the line of David, and was of the stock of the Asmonæi, or Maccabees; Josephus mentions him in bk. xii. ch. iv. and v., and Eusebius in his Chronicle. For Christ was descended both from high priests, such as Judas, Jonathas, and Simon Maccabæus, and from kings, He being King and High Priest, as S. Thomas, and Bonaventure teach, and among the fathers, Nazianzen and Augustine, whom Suarez (*loc. cit.*) quotes and follows. The Kings of Judah used to take as their wives the daughters of the high priests.

Ver. 27.—*Which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the Son of Salathiel.* These two are quite distinct from the Zorobabel and Salathiel mentioned by S. Matthew (ch. i.), and described by him as descended from David through Solomon; for these mentioned by S. Luke descend from David through Nathan. So think Pereira, Toletus, Francis Lucas, and others. Perhaps these two descendants of Nathan, being raised to the princely dignity, borrowed the names of those of Solomon's family who were illustrious in that state.

Ver. 31.—*Which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David.* Some think that this Nathan was the prophet who reprehended David for his adultery with Bathsheba (2 Kings xii. i.) So think Origen, N. de Lyra, Burgensis, Albertus Magnus, and also S. Augustine (bk. lxxxviii. q. lxi). But S. Augustine (Retract. bk. i. ch. xxvi.) rightly withdraws this theory, for this Nathan was born of David and Bathsheba when they were joined in lawful marriage, as appears from 2 Sam. v. 14 and 1 Chron. iii. 5.

Ver. 38.—*Which was the son of God*—as handiwork, not as son; for God, even as a potter, formed and fashioned Adam the first man out of the earth. And hence the Arabic version renders "*who was from God*," whereas, in other cases, it renders, for "who was," "son."

S. Luke, then, brings the genealogy of Christ up to Adam, but S. Matthew only to Abraham—the father of the faithful, and founder of the Synagogue.

Why does S. Luke make this addition?

1. S. Athanasius (Discourse on "All things are given unto Me by My Father") says. "Luke, beginning with the Son of God, went back up to Adam, to show that the body which Jesus assumed had its origin from Adam, who was formed by God."

2. S. Irenæus (book iii. ch. xxxiii.) says, "So was Christ made the beginning of the living, since Adam was made the beginning of the dead; for this cause also S. Luke, beginning the commencement of the generation with the Lord, brings it back to Adam, signifying that they did not regenerate Him, but He them, into the Gospel of life."

3. S. Leo (*Serm.* x. *De Nativitate Domini*) says, "The evangelist Luke traced the genealogy of the Lord's race from His birth, to show that even those ages which came before the deluge were joined to this mystery and that all the steps of the succession tended to Him in whom alone was the salvation of all."

4. Francis Lucas says that it was in order that S. Luke might signify that through Jesus men are led back to God, having been through Adam led away from God.

Symbolically, Euthymius says, "Luke, beginning from the humanity of Christ, leads back to His Divinity, showing that Christ indeed began as man, but that as God He was without beginning.

5. S. Ambrose gives another reason, "Now, what could be more fair and fitting with respect to Adam who, according to the Apostle, received the figure of Christ, than that the sacred generation should begin with the Son of God and end with the Son of God; and that he that was created should precede in figure, that He that was born might follow in truth; and that he who was made in the image of God should go before, for whose sake the likeness of God came down."

6. S. Augustine (*de Consens. Evang.* book ii. ch. iv.) recounts

the seventy-seven generations here given, by which, he says, is signified the remission and abolition of all sins whatever, to be made by the Saviour Jesus, according to the words of Christ, "I say not unto thee unto seven times but unto seventy times seven."

Lastly, notice here the noble pedigree of Christ which S. Luke and S. Matthew trace from Jesus Himself through so many kings, prophets, and patriarchs to Adam, the first made—nay, to God Himself, through four thousand years, in one unbroken line. For there is no prince or king in all the world who can trace his descent in a straight line for a thousand years. As to why Christ deferred His coming and incarnation for so long, Barradi gives ten moral reasons in vol. i., book v., ch. xxxi.

This generation of Christ was prefigured by Jacob's ladder. So says Rupertus (on Matt. i.), "This generation is Jacob's ladder; and the sides of the ladder are the princes and fathers of the generation, Abraham and David, to whom the promise was made. The last step, on which the Lord leaned, is the Blessed Joseph, He leaned on him as a pupil on his master."

Tropologically, "*who was*" is significant of the vanity of this world, the life of man passes away, generation by generation, and is straightway turned from the present into the past, from "*is*" to "*was*."—So the poet sings:

Adieu to Ilium (fuit Ilium) and the high renown of Teucer's race.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The temptation and fasting of Christ.* 13 *He overcometh the devil:* 14 *beginneth to preach.* 16 *The people of Nazareth admire his gracious words.* 33 *He cureth one possessed of a devil.* 38 *Peter's mother in law,* 40 *and divers other sick persons.* 41 *The devils acknowledge Christ, and are reproved for it.* 43 *He preacheth through the cities.*

AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11 And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

14 ¶ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 ¶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

33 ¶ And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word *is* this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 ¶ And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

40 ¶ Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers

diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking *them* suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

Ver. 1.—*And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan,* having been there baptized by John a little time before, and having *visibly* received the Holy Spirit, whose fulness He had already obtained *invisibly* in the first instant of His conception.

Ver. 2.—*Tempted of the devil.* In the Greek πειραζόμενος, suffering or sustaining temptation by the devil. See Commentary on Matt. iv. 5.

Ver. 5.—*In a moment of time.* S. Ambrose says, "It is not so much the quickness of the view which is indicated, as the fleeting frailty of power which is expressed. For in a moment they all pass away. And often the honour of the world is gone ere it is come. For what can be lasting in the world when the worlds themselves are not lasting."

Ver. 14.—*And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.* In the Greek ἐν δυνάμει, in the power, strength, or force of the Spirit. Under a strong impulse of the Spirit, Jesus returned to Galilee. For the Holy Ghost was moving Him, and powerfully impelling Him to put forth at this time that spiritual power which He had received from the beginning of His conception, but which He had hitherto shut up and hidden within Himself, and to begin in Galilee with immense ardour and zeal, His ministry of preaching, and confirm it by His admirable holiness of life and His stupendous miracles. Hence Theophylact renders it ἐνθουσιῶν, driven and urged on by the enthusiasm and Divine afflatus of the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 16.—*And He came to Nazareth.* Note here that while Christ is said, in v. 14, to have gone into Galilee, He is not said to have entered Nazareth which is situated there, as S. Matthew (ch. iv.

13) has it, but Capernaum, and there to have done the things which S. Matthew relates in chaps. iv. to xiii., all of which S. Luke passes over here, and then He is said to have come to Nazareth. S. Luke wished at the very outset to state the reason why Christ would not teach in Nazareth, namely, that He was despised by His fellow-townsmen as being the son of a carpenter. And though this only happened subsequently, yet Christ foresaw that it would be the case, and therefore turned aside from Nazareth and went to Capernaum, which He made the seat of His ministry, as S. Matthew relates in iv. 13.

And stood up for to read. It was (and still is) the custom among the Jews that each one should read the Hebrew books of Holy Scripture in the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, both that he might learn the law of God from it, and also that he might be stirred up to the worship, love, and service of God. Moreover, it was the part of the Rabbin and the teachers, such as Jesus was, to read the Holy Scripture publicly, to interpret it, to preach, and to teach.

Ver. 17.—*And there was delivered unto Him* (by the attendant) *the book of the prophet Esaias.* This was done by the counsel and direction of God, that Jesus might show from Isaiah that He was the Messiah described by that prophet.

And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written (Isa. lxi. 1). Christ seems so to have opened the book that, without looking for it, He lighted upon this passage of Isaiah by the will and guidance of God. The Vulgate, "as He unrolled the book," is better; and Vatablus, "when He had unfolded;" others, "when He had spread out," for this is the meaning of the Greek ἀναπτύξας. For the books of the Hebrews were not divided into leaves, but consisted of one long piece of parchment which was rolled round a cylinder from beginning to end, as maps are nowadays. In order to read this parchment it was therefore necessary to unroll it, and spread it out.

Ver. 18.—*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: because He hath anointed me.* The Holy Spirit, who was in Me from the beginning, descending upon Me here in the baptism which I have now received from John the Baptist, descending visibly in the form of a dove,

while the voice of God the Father spoke forth in thunder, "This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him," has by this sign, as by a visible anointing, publicly declared, authorised, and, as it were, consecrated Me as the Teacher, Prophet, Saviour, and Lawgiver of the world, and especially of the Jews to whom I was promised, and therefore—

He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, for the rich Scribes and Pharisees despise My lowliness and My poverty.

Observe the words "hath anointed me;" for in Hebrew "Messiah," and in Greek Χριστὸς, mean "anointed." This anointing of Christ was accomplished *secretly* in the Incarnation—

(1.) By the grace of the hypostatic union, which made Him in the highest degree holy and divine—nay, made Him God.

(2.) By the plenitude of graces which flowed from this union. For other saints are said to be anointed with the grace and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost Himself, as though with the very fountain and plenitude of all graces, that the Man Christ might become a superabundant fountain pouring forth its grace into all the apostles, martyrs, virgins, and confessors, so says Basil (*de Spiritu Sancto*, ch. xxvi.). Christ was, as I have said, *publicly* anointed in His baptism, *to heal them that are brokenhearted*—to heal and console those who, by reason of their sins, and the burden of the law of Moses, as well as their ignorance of the things of God, are afflicted in spirit, and pant for the knowledge of God, His pardon, His grace, and His salvation, and who, therefore, look for the Messiah. Hence Symmachus and Theodotus render it; so S. Jerome tells us in his Commentary on Isa. lxi., "to bind up the wounds of sinners."

To preach deliverance to the captives—that I may preach, announce, and bring freedom, through penance and My grace, to those who are held captive by sin and the devil.

And recovering of sight to the blind. The Hebrew and Chaldee versions of Isaiah give "*opening to those bound*," *i.e.*, as Symmachus has it, "*loosening to those bound*." But the Septuagint, and S. Luke following them, render it in the Greek ἀνάβλεψιν, "*looking again*," that they may see again. For the Hebrews call those that are

blind *bound*, or *shut*, like the Latin idiom, "Moles seized in their eyes," and consequently they call the illumination by which the eyes of the blind are opened "opening." The meaning, therefore, is, Christ shall both restore sight to those who are physically, and illumine those who are spiritually, blind, and are ignorant of God and of the way of salvation. He shall teach them the knowledge of God and the way to save their souls. This was what Isaiah (xlii. 7) clearly foretold that the Messiah should do: "I will give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind." And hence it is plain that Isaiah in ch. xlii., is not speaking literally of the deliverance from the Babylonian captivity wrought by Cyrus, as Toletus would have it, but of the deliverance from the captivity of sin and of the devil wrought by Christ; for Cyrus restored sight to no one, but Christ to many. I confess, however, that there is an allusion to Cyrus, he being a type of Christ. To the Hebrews in Babylon who were "bound" he gave "opening and loosening," as the Hebrew version has it, when he freed them from captivity and sent them back into Judæa.

To set at liberty them that are bruised—into liberty and health. The Arabic has "to send thee bound into remission." Pagninus, "that I may send forth the broken by remission." So also Vatablus. These words are not in Isaiah lxi. 1 in the Hebrew; they have been added paraphrastically by S. Luke or his interpreter, and seem to form another explanation of "to heal them that are brokenhearted." So Forerius on Isaiah lxi., and Francis Lucas on this passage. Origen omits "to heal them that are brokenhearted," and reads instead, "to send forth the broken into liberty;" and he adds, "What was so broken or shattered as the man who, when sent away by Jesus, was healed?"

For "broken" the Greek has τετραυσμένους, which Vatablus and others translate "broken."

Ver. 19.—*To preach the acceptable year of the Lord*—the pleasing year—in Hebrew רצון שנת, *scenat ratson*; in the Septuagint ἐνιαυτὸν εὐδοκίας, that is, as S. Jerome renders it, "the placable year," or, as

others with propriety, "the year of the good pleasure," of divine benevolence and liberality, such as was the year of the jubilee to which he here alludes. For the year of the jubilee was the type and figure of this evangelical year which Christ brought. So the whole time of the preaching of Christ, and thenceforward all the time of Christianity, is a year of jubilee to those who obey Christ and accept His liberty—a year of grace, mercy, peace, remission, liberality, and salvation, in which, after God's long anger against us, we are restored to His grace, His favour, His heirship, His glory, and all the former blessings which we had in Paradise in the state of innocence. This is what S. Paul says in 2 Cor. vi. 2, "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

The Vulgate adds, *and the day of retribution*, of vengeance. The year of the jubilee, that is, the time of Christianity, shall be to the enemies of Christ a time of vengeance, when God shall avenge the human race on its enemies and oppressors, the demons that oppress it; for Christ shall deliver men from the devils, and shall cast them down, according to Isaiah xxxv. 4, "Say unto the timid, Be comforted, and fear not; behold, your God shall bring the vengeance of retribution. God Himself shall come and shall save you." Vulgate. And Christ says, in John xii. 31, "Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast forth."

Ver. 20.—*And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him.* "That they might hear," says Euthymius, "how He interpreted what He had read." For already the fame of what He had said and done at Capernaum had been noised abroad everywhere, so that many held Him to be the Messiah; and they especially desired to hear this from Christ. For they knew that the passage of Isaiah read by Him was a prophecy of the Messiah, and so they listened with eagerness to Him while He explained it.

Ver. 21.—*And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture* ("which has sounded," says Euthymius, and the Syriac version), *fulfilled in your ears.* This day is fulfilled in your hearing this prophecy of Isaiah, while you hear me preaching to you and to the

rest of the poor of Galilee the year of full remission, and I am prepared to do, nay, I have already done in Capernaum, all that Isaiah has here foretold. I am the Messiah of whom Isaiah there prophesies, whom you, in accordance with the predictions of Jacob and Daniel, are already eagerly expecting every moment. For, though Jesus does not clearly say that He is the Messiah, yet He tacitly implies it.

Ver. 22.—*And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?* "Words of grace," he calls them (1) gracious, beautiful, suave, and pleasant; (2) full of grace and the Holy Spirit; (3) efficacious to move and persuade; (4) full of wisdom and eloquence, so as to convince those that heard them. For Christ spoke with a tongue that was more than human. "He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes," Matt. vii. 29.

Bore Him testimony—that He spoke well, not that He was the Messiah. Hence they call Him "the son of Joseph;" and, a little after, when they were rebuked by Him, they despised Him and wished to cast Him down headlong. So, nowadays, many people praise a preacher so long as he says to them what is pleasing and elegant, but when he attacks their vices they abuse and persecute him. Such is the way of the fickle multitude, who love themselves and their own desires. However, Bede takes this as meaning that they bore witness that He was the Messiah of whom Isaiah had prophesied these things; and he adds:—"How great their blindness, when, only on account of their knowledge of His origin, and because they had seen Him nourished, and that He had developed, through the stages of life among themselves, they set Him at nought whom, by his words and works, they knew to be Christ."

Ver. 23.—*And He said unto them, ye will surely say unto Me this proverb* (in the Greek παραβολήν—parable, proverb, or adage, in common use), *Physician, heal thyself*—that is, cure Thine own people and Thine own country, which should be as dear to Thee as Thyself; cure Thy fellow-Nazarenes as Thou hast cured or art said to have cured the Capernaites. Thus it was that Christ presently explains it, He, by His Divine Spirit, seeing the hidden thoughts of

the Nazarenes, and that they were wishing in their hearts for that which He now said. Anticipating their secret thought, He meets and answers it. "It was common among the Jews," says Titus, "to taunt physicians who had caught any disease with this impudent and ironical saying, Physician, heal thyself." For the common sense of mankind holds, and reason favours the opinion, that he who cannot cure himself, or neglects to do so, cannot cure others or should not attempt it. In point of fact, however, experience not seldom shows that the physician who cures others is unable to effect his own cure, but hands himself over to other physicians to be treated, because appetite often blinds the reason, and diseases obscure one's scientific knowledge. Hence we judge better and more safely about the diseases of others than about our own. Self-love often perverts our judgment, so that Solomon warns us with the words, "Lean not unto thine own understanding," Prov. iii. 5.

Tropologically, S. Anthony thus expounded the saying, "Physician, heal thyself;" He that will cure the faults of others let him first cure his own. For they that will help others before they cure themselves shall relapse into their own faults. Indeed experience teaches us that they who remedy any fault in themselves easily cure it in others.

Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Thy country. Hence it is plain that these events took place in Nazareth after Jesus had preached and worked many miracles in the city of Capernaum, as has been said at v. 16, and S. Augustine (*De Consensu*, bk. ii. cap. 42) observes. The Gloss interprets, "We do not believe what a vague rumour has published, seeing that among us, on whom favours of the kind would have been more fittingly conferred, Thou hast done no such work." Here in Nazareth, Thy fatherland which conceived Thee, nourished Thee, and brought Thee unto manhood, Thou hast brethren, sisters, kinsfolk, and neighbours, some rich, others poor, some sick, others suffering in other respects. Why then dost Thou not miraculously succour these Thine own people, to whom Thou art bound by blood, by love of home, and by natural affection?

Ver. 24.—*And He said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.* Ye, O Nazarenes, despise Me as your

fellow-townsman, and the son of a carpenter; wherefore you are unworthy that I should confer benefits upon you. Therefore (says the Interlinear), I work not among you, not because I hate my own country, but because you are incredulous. S. Cyril adds that a citizen, being always near to his fellow-citizens, is deprived of the reverence which is his due at the hands of those who know him.

Thirdly, S. Chrysostom says, "Christ had abstained from miracles among the Nazarenes that He might not provoke them to envy." For, as S. Ambrose says, God is a despiser of the envious; and the Gloss remarks that it is almost natural for fellow-citizens to envy one another; nor do they take account of merit, but call to mind a man's frail childhood.

Chrysologus (Serm. 48, at the end,) remarks, "To be powerful is, among one's own people, a biting and a burning; to be eminent among one's fellow-citizens and neighbours burns up one's neighbours' glory; and if neighbours owe honour to a neighbour they count it slavery." There is an amusing apologue of a parrot, which touches this subject. A parrot, brought from the East to the West, where birds of this kind are not common, wondered that he was held in greater esteem and honour than he had been accustomed to in his own country. He occupied an ivory cage plaited with silver wire, and fed on the daintiest viands, such as did not fall to the share of the others, which were only western birds, but inferior to himself neither in beauty nor in the power of imitating the human voice. Then says a turtle-dove, shut up in the same cage with him, "There is nothing wonderful in this, for no one receives in his own country the honour which is his due."

Tropologically, Christ here teaches the faithful, particularly men devoted to the Apostolic calling, that they ought to curb or to divert themselves of all excessive affection for their own country and kinsfolk, that they may be useful to all men—

> "The fishes' native country is the boundless sea;
> Let the wide earth the brave man's country be."

S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* xviii.) says very well, "For great and noble men there is one country—that Jerusalem which is per-

ceived by the mind, not those countries which we see here, now inhabited by one race of men, now by another." And again (*Orat.* xxv.) "These earthly fatherlands, these differences of race, are the scenes, the illusions, of this our short fleeting life. For whatsoever country each one has previously got possession of, whether by injustice or by misfortune, that is called his country, while we are all alike strangers and sojourners, however much we may play upon the meaning of words." Such was S. Basil, of whom S. Gregory of Nyssa, in his life, writes, "Basil the Great was free from the fear of exile, because he held that the only fatherland of men was Paradise, and regarded all the earth as nature's common place of exile."

Vers. 25 and 26.—*But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. Three years and six months*—This does not appear in the Old Testatment, but Jesus, as God, knew it, and revealed it to S. James, Ep. v. 17, for as to what is said in 1 Kings xviii. 1, "The word of the Lord came to Elias, in the third year, saying, Go and show thyself to Ahab that I may give rain upon the face of the earth." This third year is not to be taken from the beginning of the drought, but as from the sojourn of Elias in Sarepta.

In all the land—Israel and the neighbouring region, such as Sidon, and Sarepta, where this widow was.

The sense is that, as Elias, in the time of the famine, procured food for no Israelite, but only for the widow of Sarepta, a Sidonian, a Gentile, and a foreigner, because, valuing the prophet very highly, and believing him that God would provide for her hunger according to his word, she gave him the little oil and meal which she had, postponing her own and her children's wants to his; so Christ, in like manner, puts the Capernaites before the Nazarenes, His own fellow-citizens, because the former hear Him as a Teacher sent from Heaven, honour Him and pay Him respect, but the latter despise

Him as a carpenter, and their own fellow-townsman; and so He imparts to the former the spiritual bread of heavenly doctrine and miracles, but leaves the latter in their spiritual want. For Elias was the type and precursor of Christ, and the widow of Sarepta the type and first-fruits of the Gentiles whom Christ preferred before the Jews, His fellow-countrymen. Bede says that "Sidon" in Hebrew signifies "useless hunting;" "Sarepta," "conflagration" or "neediness"—namely, of bread; that is, the Gentile world given up to the pursuit of worldly things, and suffering from the conflagration of their carnal passions and the want of spiritual bread. Elias is the prophetic word, which, being received, feeds the hearts of them that believe.

Ver. 27.—*And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian*, a foreigner and a Gentile. As Elisha, following his master Elias, did not prophecy to the Jews, his own people, but to foreigners, and did not therefore heal the lepers that were in Judæa, but Naaman the Gentile, by reason of his faith and their incredulity; so I preach and work miracles among these Capernaite strangers, on account of their faith, reverence, and goodwill towards Me, but I leave you Nazarenes alone for your infidelity, your irreverence, and your contempt of Me. For Elisha, like Elias, was a type and forerunner of Christ; and Naaman the Gentile, a type of the Gentiles to whom Christ, leaving the Jews, would, by the apostles, transfer His faith, His church, and His grace. So Bede, Titus, Theophylact, Euthymius, Jansenius, Toletus, and others.

Ver. 28.—*And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath*—because they knew that they were touched by these two examples of the widow and Naaman, as being incredulous, and that a slur was cast upon them as being unworthy of the miracles of Jesus; and again because they were indignant that Jesus, their fellow-townsman and equal, should compare Himself with, and place Himself before, Elias and Elisha, nay, make Himself out the Messiah, from the prophecy of Isaiah; and, lastly, because Christ hinted that He would transfer His gifts from the Jews to the Gentiles. So S. Thomas, Toletus, Francis Lucas, and others.

Ver. 29.—*And rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong*—"*led him*"—dragged Him, as it seemed to them, by violence, but, in reality, Christ of His own accord allowed Himself to be led and dragged.

That they might cast him down headlong—from the top of the hill to the bottom, and so kill Him, as one who had defamed his own native place, and inflicted injury and insult upon it; and therefore they brought Him forth outside of the city, as being unworthy of it, that they might cast Him from the top of the mountain, dash Him down upon the rocks, and break His whole body to pieces. This was a grievous piece of violence on the part of the Nazarenes against Christ, their fellow-citizen, and thus, as Euthymius observes, they confirmed in act, what He had spoken in words, namely, that a prophet is not held in honour in his own country, but dishonoured, nay, slain; and that therefore the Nazarenes were unworthy of the preaching and miracles of Christ.

S. Bonaventure, Toletus, and others add, that they took Christ out of the city to the top of the hill that they might slay Him as a blasphemer, because He had made Himself the Messiah. For though, by the law, the blasphemer was to be stoned, still they wished to cast Christ headlong upon the rocks and stones, because this is the same as if they had stoned Him. Whether the stones are cast at the man, or the man hurled headlong upon the stones, is all one; indeed, the latter is more cruel and terrible. So it was that they cast S. Stephen out of Jerusalem as a blasphemer, and stoned him; and S. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, was hurled down from a pinnacle of the Temple as a blasphemer, because He taught that Christ was the Messiah.

S. Ambrose points out that these men were worse than the devil, who did but set Christ upon a pinnacle of the Temple, and say to Him, "Cast thyself down," while these did their best to hurl Him down by force. "The heritage of the disciples," he says, "is worse than that of the master—he tempts the Lord by word, they attempt His life by their act—he says, 'Cast thyself down,' they do Him violence in order to cast Him down."

Ver. 30.—*But He passing through the midst of them went His way.* Maldonatus thinks that Christ here made Himself invisible, S. Ambrose and Bede that He changed their wills, so that they consented to let Him go. Others hold the better opinion that Christ turned away their imagination or their eyes, or suspended their consciousness and held their hands and feet, so that, like men bereft of their senses, though they saw Him they could not or dared not lay hold of Him. Wherefore Christ here manifested His Godhead. S. Ambrose says, "Behold! the minds of these furious men, being suddenly changed, or stupefied, He goes down through the midst of them." And he adds the reason, "For when He wills He is taken; when He wills He slips away; when He wills He is slain; because His hour had not yet come," John vii. 30. For as yet He must preach, and at last be crucified at Jerusalem by the Father's decree, but not cast down headlong in Nazareth. So Bede, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and others. Brocardus, in his "Description of the Holy Land," gives the tradition that Christ glided away from out of the hands of the Jews, and suddenly appeared on the opposite side of the mountain, and that therefore the place is called "the Leap of the Lord." N. de Lyra adds that the rock on which Christ stood yielded, and received like wax the impress of His feet, just as, when ascending into heaven from Mount Olivet, He left the marks of His feet there. This is what Adrichomius says, in his "Description of the Holy Land," on the word "the Leap of the Lord:" "The tradition is that Christ fled to a high mountain, which is called from that circumstance 'the Leap of the Lord,' and that, at the touch of His garment, the rock flowed, and being melted and loosened like wax, made a kind of hollow for the Lord's body to be received in and protected, a hollow of a capacity equal to the quantity of the Lord's body. And in this, even at the present day, the lineaments and folds of the garment on the Lord's back, and the marks of His feet, are preserved, marked out as though by the hand of a sculptor." This, however, lacks confirmation.

On verse 32 see what I have said on Matthew xiii. 5, viii. 14; on verse 33 see Mark i. 23.

CHAPTER V.

1 *Christ teacheth the people out of Peter's ship.* 4 *In a miraculous taking of fishes, sheweth how he will make him and his partners fishers of men.* 12 *Cleanseth the leper.* 16 *Prayeth in the wilderness.* 18 *Healeth one sick of the palsy.* 27 *Calleth Matthew the publican.* 29 *Eateth with sinners, as being the physician of souls.* 34 *Foretelleth the fastings and afflictions of the apostles after his ascension.* 36 *And likeneth faint-hearted and weak disciples to old bottles and worn garments.*

AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

12 And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on *his* face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13 And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.

18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him.

19 And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

36 And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a

new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39 No man also having drunk old *wine* straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

Ver. 6.—*They inclosed a great multitude of fishes*—for Peter had said, "At Thy word I will let down the net." Behold here the fruit and reward of obedience. Jesus did this—1. In order that by providing them with food, He might prepare them for their vocation and ministry. I have chosen you to be My disciples, make not excuse that ye must work for your livelihood as fishermen. Behold this miraculous draft of fishes, and believe that I am able to provide you with all things necessary for life more easily and more abundantly than ye are able to provide them yourselves. 2. To teach from this miracle, that they were soon to become successful fishers of men.

Ver. 7.—*And they beckoned unto their partners*—because from joy and wondering astonishment they were unable to speak.

Ver. 10.—*Fear not* (be not lost in astonishment, from henceforth you are to be fishermen in a higher sense of the word), from henceforth thou shalt catch men. ζωγρῶν from ζωγρέω, which means—

First, to hunt or catch some living thing, hence the Arabic translates it, from henceforth thou shalt be a fisherman, for thou shalt fish for and take men. Thou, Peter, shalt catch men, not by wounding and disabling them, as wild animals are taken; but as fish which are unhurt by the net, so thou shalt catch men not by violence or force, but through the power and operation of the spirit.

Secondly (if we derive the word from ζῶν and ἐγρομαι or ἐγείρω), to quicken, or recall to life. Hence S. Ambrose (Hexam., lib. v. cap. vi.) "Thou shalt be a life-giver to men;" and the Syriac, "Thou shalt be a fisher of men, to recall them to life." Fishermen, indeed, catch fish to provide themselves with food, but thou, O Peter, art to become a fisher of men, not to destroy them, but to give them life by raising them from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness,

for like as fish taken from the water die, so men caught by thee become dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, and, in a sense, as fish are assimilated by those who feed on them, so do those who are inclosed in the Gospel net, become in very truth members of Christ. Figuratively, the ship of Peter is the Church, the head of which is Peter and his successors. The Pope is therefore the chief fisherman to whom the words of Christ apply, "Thou shalt catch men." It is the duty, therefore, of the Roman Pontiff directly and by means of others to convert the heathen, as the early occupants of the see of Rome converted the Roman people and sent apostolic men to preach the word of life to heathen lands.

Thus S. Gregory sent Augustine to convert the English people.

S. Ambrose observes, that some men, *e.g.*, the martyrs, like fish, are taken by the hook; others, *i.e.*, the body of the faithful, by the net, and adds, "Nets are the means whereby the Apostles catch men, for nets do not destroy but preserve what they take, and bring to the surface that which is floating below."

Nets are called in Latin "retia," because they are retentive "retinentia," of that which they have taken.—Gloss.

Ver. 32.—*I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; i.e.*, to call them by means of repentance to grace and future glory. Hence as S. Ambrose acutely remarks, "If grace flows from repentance, he who thinks little of repentance forfeits grace."

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ reproveth the Pharisees' blindness about the observation of the sabbath, by scripture, reason, and miracle.* 13 *Chooseth twelve apostles.* 17 *Healeth the diseased.* 20 *Preacheth to his disciples before the people of blessings and curses.* 27 *How we must love our enemies.* 46 *And join the obedience of good works to the hearing of the word: lest in the evil day of temptation we fall like an house built upon the face of the earth, without any foundation.*

AND it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands.

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him;

4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

6 And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy *it*?

10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And when it was day he called *unto him* his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

14 Simon (whom he also named Peter), and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas, James the *son* of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16 And Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

17 And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed *be ye* poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed *are ye* that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are ye* that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24 But woe unto ye that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to take thy* coat also.

30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again.

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

39 And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

Ver. 1.—*And it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first.*—On the second Sabbath. The Arabic version.

What was this Sabbath?

1. The eighth day of unleavened bread or the last day of the Passover. Epiphanius, Vetablus, and others.

2. The first day of unleavened bread or the second day of the Passover, and therefore both the first and second Sabbath or Feast-day. Isidore, Euthymius, and another.

3. The Feast of Pentecost. The second or next greatest to the Passover. Maldonatus.

4. I however consider that this Sabbath was not a feast, but a Sabbath in the strict sense of the word, *i.e.* a day on which the Jews were forbidden even to prepare their food (Ex. xxxv. 3), which they were permitted to do on other feasts (Ex. xii. 16).

That this is the true interpretation is clear from the other Evangelists, who speak of this day as simply a Sabbath.

(In accordance with À Lapide the Revised Version reads, "Now it came to pass on a Sabbath.")

But why is this Sabbath called the second after the first?

1. Because it followed on a feast (Theophylact); or, as others hold, because it was followed by a feast, and thus became the first before the second, which was close at hand.

2. Scaliger considers it to be the first Sabbath after the Feast of the Passover, called the second after the first, because it was the first after the second day of unleavened bread, from which day was numbered the seven weeks to Pentecost. So also Vasquez.

3. S. Chrysostom and others think the words imply a feast or Sabbath in a twofold sense, a day on which another feast-day falls, and that they convey the same meaning as the Latin word "duplitia;" but to this interpretation Jansenius objects.

4. But it is most probable that the words mean the Sabbath which fell within the week of Pentecost or on the Feast-day itself. The Pascal Sabbath being distinguished as the first or principal Sabbath of the whole year. S. John xix. 31.

(1.) This opinion is confirmed by the fact that what is here narrated of the disciples must have happened about the time of Pentecost, *i.e.* when the corn was ripe. Hence the command to the Jews to offer their firstfruits, Lev. xxiii. 17.

(2.) And because, as I have showed, this was a Sabbath in the strict sense of the word, and was called second, in respect of some other Sabbath which held rank as the first, and not with any reference to the Passover or any other feast.

(3). Because, again, none of the other opinions seem to be probable. For, to sum up, the Feasts of the Passover and Pentecost are so nearly connected, that, although one is first in dignity and order, the second follows in all respects closely upon it. For this reason the Italians call Pentecost the Passover of the Holy Ghost. The same may be said also of the Sabbaths which fall within these feasts; therefore the Church numbers her Sundays from Easter to Pentecost, and from the latter festival to Advent.

But you will object that the week of Pentecost was not a feast in the same sense as the week of the Passover: therefore that the

Sabbath which fell in it was not of more importance than any other. I answer that although the Pentecostal week was not commanded by the law to be kept as a feast, it was so kept by the piety of the Jews. Genebrardus' Hebrew Calendar, and on the Psalms.

Figuratively, says S. Ambrose, we may understand this Sabbath to mean the Gospel, which is second to the law in point of time, but first in dignity and importance.

He further adds, commenting on Ps. xlvii., the words "second Sabbath after the first" mean the Jewish Sabbath, for after the resurrection the Lord's-day took its place. From that time therefore it became second in dignity, yet at the same time it was rightly called first, because of its sanctity and the priority of its institution.

Figuratively, Christ taught and worked His chief miracles on the Sabbath, not only to prefigure the spiritual Sabbath, when the mind, no longer taken up with evil lusts and passions, will be free to serve God alone, but because of the gathering together of the people, as they assemble now on the Lord's-day.

There was also another reason, viz., to teach the Jews the true observance of the Sabbath, and that they might no longer be offended at the wonderful works which Christ wrought on that day, as were the Scribes, who accused Him of transgressing the law, and gave Him up to that death by means of which God effected the redemption of mankind. Bede.

Ver. 5.—*The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.* See S. Matt. xii. 8.

Ver. 11.—*And they were filled with madness.* ἀνοίας, deprived of understanding, they could not answer Him a word; they were filled with anger because they could not gainsay the reasoning of Christ, and with envy, as the Syriac renders it, which was the cause of their madness. Their eyes were blinded so that they could not see the truth! Hence Francis Lucas adds, they communed one with another what they might do with Jesus, *i.e.* how they might make away with Him.

Ver. 12.—*He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all*

night in prayer to God—communing with God in prayer, asking the Father that He might choose for the ministry men fitted to be apostles, and would obtain for them an abundance of spiritual grace to enable them to fulfil the duties of their office; and also that He might teach us to pray in like manner.

So the Church at Ember-tide enjoins her children to fast and to pray that fitting persons may be chosen for the work of the ministry, and that those admitted to any holy function may be filled with grace and heavenly benediction; for as with the priest so with the people. When a chief pastor is zealous and God-fearing, he is a blessing and a strength to his diocese, but if he be an evil liver or slothful, he becomes a stumbling-block and offence to believers. In like manner, also, a good priest makes a good parish, but an evil one is for a destruction to his people.

Figuratively, Christ teaches us to pray in the night season that we may be the better able in silence and solitude to collect our thoughts and lift our hearts unto God; that we may be preserved from terror by night and from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and also that by our prayers during the night we may obtain spiritual graces for the profit of our fellow-men during the ensuing day.

Hence Christ prayed by night and taught in the daytime. So did S. Paul, Acts xvi. 25; and many other saints; 1 Tim. v. 5.

For the same reason David so often commends prayer during the night time, "Ye that by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary," Ps. cxxxiv. 1, 2.

"At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee," Ps. cxix. 62.

"In the night I commune with mine own heart," Ps. lxxvii. 6.

"My tears have been my meat day and night," Ps. xlii. 3.

See also Commentary on Deut. vi. 7.

Ver. 20.—*Blessed are ye poor . . .* in spirit (see S. Matt. v. 3), for poorness of spirit is a rich and precious virtue. Therefore S. Ambrose rightly concludes that poverty, privations, and sorrow, which the world counts evil, not only are no hindrances, but on the contrary have been declared by Him who could neither deceive

nor be deceived, to be of great assistance towards the attainment of a holy and a happy life.

The same writer goes on to give the reason why S. Luke has reduced the number of the beatitudes to four. He was content that they should include the four cardinal virtues. Justice, which, coveting not the possessions of others, rejoices in holy poverty; temperance, which had rather suffer want than be full; prudence, which chooses to sorrow here, in hope of the joy which shall be revealed; and Fortitude, which for sake of Christ and His Gospel, endures persecution and so triumphs over every enemy. Hence we read that the poor, the temperate, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness (S. Matthew), the just, those who weep, the prudent who despise earthly things and seek heavenly, those hated of their fellowmen, not because of any misdeeds but for the Gospel's sake, who, steadfast in the faith, seek for future happiness by pleasing God rather than men—that these are indeed blessed.

Ver. 24.—*But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.* To the four beatitudes Christ, by antithesis, opposes as many states of misery and unhappiness.

The poor are blessed for all eternity, but the rich receive in this world their consolation; the hungry shall be satisfied with good things, but those that are full now shall be sent empty away. They who weep here shall hereafter rejoice, but for those who laugh now there is reserved a future of mourning; and those that are spoken well of by their fellow men, are laying up for themselves an eternity of woe.

For Οὐαί, Latin *væ*, as S. Gregory points out (Hom. ix. on Ezekiel), oftentimes in Scripture denotes the wrath of God and everlasting punishment. Hence this word is here used by Christ partly as a lament over the future and eternal misery of the worldly, (S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* 44 *ad pop.*); partly as a prophecy of it (Titus); partly as threatening and decreeing such punishment against them (Tertullian, bk. iv. against Marcian).

You that are rich. As by poor we understand those poor in spirit who love poverty because thereby they are the better able to

please God, so we may take the word rich to mean those who, greedy of gain, heap up riches by any means in their power, and look upon wealth as their sole happiness and the one object of their life. Hence mortal sin, robbery, extortion, unfair dealing, and other such like sins. Therefore the denunciation of Christ. But those who are rich by inheritance and honest labour, as long as they are not corrupted by their riches, but use them for the glory of God and the good of their fellow men, in reality are poor, as were the patriarchs, David, and many other of the saints of old.

For it is not the amount he possesses, but the use a man makes of his riches which is accounted sin. So "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil." See 1 Tim. vi. 9.

Ye have received your consolation. Ye set your heart on your riches, use them for your own evil gratification, and put them in the place of your God. Therefore ye are allowed the enjoyment of them in this life, but in the life which is to come ye will, as Christ has here declared, come short of everlasting happiness, for those who have in this world received their consolation will lose their eternal reward.

Hence S. Hieronymus (*Epist.* xxxiv.), when endeavouring to persuade Julian, a rich nobleman, to give up the world and devote himself to a holy and religious life, uses this powerful argument. "It is difficult, if not impossible," he says, "to enjoy happiness in both worlds—to give ourselves up to our evil lusts and passions here, but to become spiritually minded after death—to pass from one state of happiness to the other—to acquire glory both in this world and in the next, . . . and to be distinguished equally in heaven and on earth. Hence Abraham returned none other answer to the rich man than this, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.'" See chapter xvi. 25.

So also Christ is said to have offered S. Catherine of Siena two

crowns, one set with jewels, the other begirt with thorns, bidding her choose which she would wear in this life, which in the life to come. She chose the thorny crown, and, regardless of the anguish, pressed it firmly on her head.

Ver. 25.—*Woe unto you which are full*, &c.—ye who live only for eating and drinking, for ye shall hunger in eternity.

Actual evil-doers will indeed endure heavier punishment; but those who are gluttonous will suffer torment from the absence of those things wherein they delighted. Hence Dives prayed for but one drop of water to cool the tongue which he had accustomed to the richest food and the choicest wine. S. Euthymius.

For, as S. Basil writes, to live for pleasure alone is but to make a God of one's belly (Phil. iii. 19). From the one vice of gluttony spring innumerable others which war against the soul. Subdue then this one vice, and you will at the same time subdue many others, for innumerable are the promptings of lust, which following in the train of gluttony, hold out promise of enjoyment, but lead to everlasting misery. S. Gregory in *lib. regum, lib. v. cap.* 1.

The mind which is always accustomed to pleasure, and never weeded of evil by discipline, contracts much moral defilement (S. Bernard, *Epist.* 152); and again (*Serm.* 48, *in Cant.*), "A life spent in pleasure is both death and the shadow of death, for as a shadow follows close on that by which it is cast, a life of pleasure, beyond dispute, borders on destruction."

On the contrary, fasting and abstinence give rise to chaste thoughts, reasonable desires and healthful counsels, for by voluntary self-denial the flesh is mortified and spiritual virtues are strengthened and renewed. S. Leo, (*serm.* 11, *de jejunio*).

Hence Christ gave S. Catherine this rule of life, "Choose that which is bitter as sweet, avoid that which is sweet as bitter." See also Eccles. ii. 1.

Woe unto you which laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep—in this life, and much more in the life to come S. Basil seems in his rules to forbid all laughter, because this is a life of penitence and sorrow, but the future one of joy and gladness. Certain it is, as S.

Augustine points out, that Christ is never said to have laughed, although He often wept.

Mirth in moderation, however, is not forbidden to the followers of Christ. "A fool lifteth up his voice with laughter, but a wise man doth scarce smile a little" (Ecclus. xxi. 20); and (Eccles. ii. 2), "I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?" Commenting on which passages, I have shown that it is immoderate laughter which is condemned, and not that moderate mirth which is the mark of a kindly disposition and well-regulated mind.

Woe to you that laugh, i.e. to you who laugh with the drunken, and make merry over sinful enjoyment, for you will weep and lament for ever in hell.

Ver. 26.—*Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you,* &c. When men, who for the most part are carnally minded, speak well of you as setters forth of that which is pleasing to their ears, for they hate the truth, and persecute those who rebuke vice and restrain the evildoer, but praise them who excuse iniquity, whom God abhors. Thus did their forefathers speak well of the false prophets of old, and therefore they all have entered into condemnation. I also condemn you inasmuch as ye follow after their example. This "woe" is the contrary to the blessing promised to the true prophets, who for the gospel's sake endure persecution, v. 22. So S. Paul: "If I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." See Gal. i. 10. For he who preaches false doctrine and things pleasing to the carnal mind, causes his hearers to continue in wickedness and commit many sins, and therefore will receive greater damnation.

Again, the preacher who seeks the applause rather than the conversion of his hearers, and looks upon this as the end and object of his ministry, will be condemned; because he sought to obtain the praise of men rather than to advance the glory of God, and made the vainglory of the world the one object of his life, thus destroying the souls of those committed to his care.

Such were the false teachers whom Jeremiah and the other prophets so often were called upon to refute. "The prophets

prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so," Jer. v. 31.

Ver. 27.—*But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies.* Christ, after solemnly warning those who live for pleasure alone, now addresses His own disciples. "I have denounced woe against the wicked, but to you who hear my words, and seek the salvation of your souls, I give as a first and chief commandment that you should love your enemies." See S. Matt. v. 44.

Ver. 30.—*Give to every man that asketh of thee.* Not only if he is in want of the necessaries of life, but if he needs counsel, advice, or aid of any kind, for thus ye will be showing mercy and pity both to the souls and bodies of your fellow men. See S. Matt. v. 42. S. Luke here adds the words "to every man," which S. Matt. omits, from which we are to understand that we are to give as far as we honestly and rightly can to every one that asketh, but not to one that asketh for anything or everything. For a man may ask us to give him money for a wrongful purpose, or even to commit actual sin. Hence we are only bound to give that which, as far as we know, will neither be hurtful to ourselves, or to him that receiveth the gift: and in case we refuse to give, we must justify our refusal, so that he who asks may not go discontented away.

To every one therefore that asketh of thee, give not always that which he asks, but oftentimes that which is better—a denial if the request is one which we can show that it would be wrong to comply with. S. Augustine.

And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again, neither by power of law or in any other way, as S. Augustine explains. Which is a command, in the case of one who, under pressure of want, has despoiled thee, but is otherwise a counsel. So we read, "Ye exact all your labours," Isa. lviii. 3.

And again in the parable, the unmerciful servant, because he had no pity, was delivered to the tormentors until he should pay all the debt which had been forgiven him. S. Matt. xviii. So Spiridion, and many hermits of old, gave up to the owners the sheep which they had stolen.

Ver. 34.—*And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive* (a like benefit), *what thank have ye?*" For this is not kindness but commerce, the exchange of kindness for kindness. Ye give for what ye hope to receive, not for love of God; and thus the hope of a return of the benefit conferred deprives the act of the favour of God. Interlinear Gloss.

Ver. 35.—*Lend, hoping for nothing again.* "From men," adds the Syriac, "that you may receive your reward of God."

Nothing, i.e. no pledge or return of any kind. Christ would have us lend, not only without exacting usury for the loan, but also without expecting a similar kindness in return. For what is it but self-seeking and avarice, if I lend to another that he in his turn may lend to me? Christ here enjoins the true benevolence which lends freely, content that at the appointed time the loan should be returned. Some, indeed, think that there should be no return, but the words of Christ do not bear this construction. For that which is lent without expectation of return, is given, not lent, and becomes not a loan but a gift. Toletus, Lessius, Valentia, and others.

Hence to seek to profit by a loan is contrary to the meaning of the word and the nature of the transaction. For the word *mutuum* (in the Greek δανείζητε, *mutuum date*, Vulgate), implies that they are *mutuo animo*, who give because of duty (Varro); or, as Verius Marcellus better explains it, *mutuum* means the same as *meum tuum*, because out of friendly feeling mine becomes thine for present needs and necessities. Hence S. Gregory Nyssen. writes, "He who exacts interest on a loan, is condemned as a usurer;" for a loan is a friendly transaction, freely given and to be freely restored. Cicero, *Epist. ad Metellum.*

A kindly-hearted man, therefore, will lend to him who is in need, even though he may have reason to believe he will never be repaid, for there are many poor who cannot, and many unworthy persons who will not return that which is lent them.

Hence a witty writer, "If you lend to your friend and ask a return of the loan, you will lose either the one or the other;" and again, "By lending money, I have purchased to myself an enemy

and lost a friend." He therefore who lends should lend for the love of God, who will richly repay, as is written, "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord." See Prov. xix. 17.

Hence S. Chrysostom: "The poor receive the gift, but God becomes the debtor;" and S. Basil (*conc.* 4 *de Eleemosyna*) "That which thou art about to give to the poor for the love of God, becomes both a gift and a loan,—a gift, because there is no expectation of return—a loan, because of the goodness of God, who will richly recompense in their name those who have relieved the necessities of the poor."

Wherefore we may take in a Christian sense that which is written: "Lose thy money for thy brother and thy friend." See Ecclus. xxix. 10, and my comments thereon. But when men take that which is lent, without a thought of returning it, no one is willing to become a lender.

Ver. 38.—*Give, and it shall be given unto you.* Many are lavish of their promises, few are liberal in their gifts. Hence Antigonus, as Plutarch tells us, was commonly called Doson, because he was always ready to say δώσω, I will give, but never performed his promise of giving. Therefore, Christ bids us "give," *i.e.* give at once and without delay, and it shall be given you.

For God puts it in the hearts of men amply to repay a liberal giver. It is said that a certain monastery became rich because of the large amounts expended in charity, but that, when these were withheld, it was reduced to poverty. When the steward was complaining of this to one whom he was entertaining, the guest said *Date* and *dabitur* are sisters: you cast out the former, and soon her sister and inseparable companion followed. If you wish the latter to return, recall the former, and give as largely as you were accustomed to do. See verse 27, S. Matt. v. 42, and elsewhere. For almsgiving enriches and does not impoverish. Hence S. Chrysostom says it is the most profitable of all acts. And Christ has declared that the merciful are blessed, for they shall obtain mercy. See S. Matt. v. 7.

CHAPTER VII.

1 Christ findeth a greater faith in the centurion, a Gentile, than in any of the Jews. 10 Healeth his servant being absent. 11 Raiseth from death the widow's son at Nain. 19 Answereth John's messengers with the declaration of his miracles. 24 Testifieth to the people what opinion he held of John. 30 Inveigheth against the Jews, who with neither the manners of John nor of Jesus could be won. 36 And sheweth, by occasion of Mary Magdalene, how he is a friend to sinners, not to maintain them in sins, but to forgive them their sins, upon their faith and repentance.

NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.

18 And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

19 And John calling *unto him* two of his disciples sent *them* to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

21 And in that same hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind he gave sight.

22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

23 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

31 And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32 They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a glutonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

38 And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he* to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Ver. 1.—*Now when he had ended* (or fulfilled), *all his sayings.*

Ver. 2.—*Ready to die*, nigh unto death. Syriac.

Ver. 3.—*He sent to him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.* S. Luke ascribes the request of the Jews to the Centurion himself, because they asked in his name; but the Centurion sought not that Christ should come unto him, but only that the Lord should be told, "My servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." S. Matt. viii. The Jews asked therefore that which they knew the Centurion desired, although he was too humble-minded to seek it.

"That he would come," *i.e.*, would give up everything else, and apply himself to the healing of the servant. An expression equivalent to the Hebrew word בּא, ba, come.

Thus God came to Abimelech, Gen. xx; to Balaam, Num. xxii.; and to the Hebrews, Deut. xxxiii., when He appeared to them and gave them the Law. So it is said of the Baptist. John came, shewed himself, neither eating nor drinking. The force of the passage lies therefore in the word "heal," that he would heal his servant, whether he came—went down—to his house or not.

Ver. 6.—*Lord, trouble not thyself*, do not incur the fatigue (Syriac) of such a journey, but speak the word only, and heal my servant.

Ver. 11.—*And it came to pass the day after that He went into a city called Nain.* A city of Galilee two miles distant from Mount Tabor, situated on the river Kison, and called Nain, from the Hebrew word which denotes beauty. Thus Naomi says, "Call me not Naomi," *i.e.* fair or beautiful, "call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me" (Ruth i. 20)—words which the widow of Nain, mourning the loss of her only son, might well make her own. So also Ps. cxxxiii., "Behold how good and how pleasant (Nain) it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," and therefore how sad and sorrowful for brother to be separated from brother, mother from son, by the hand of death.

The place is specially mentioned for the confirmation of the miracle, and also because "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (S. Matt. ix. 35); and to show the bitterness of the mother's grief, for the death of her son at Nain was a greater trial to the mother than if they had been living in some country place. Just as it seems more hard for a man to be cut off in youth than in age, in health than in sickness, in prosperity than in adversity, in the springtide rather than in the winter of life, as it is written (Ecclus. xli. 1), "O Death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things. O Death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy and unto him whose strength faileth, to whom everything is a care."

Ver. 12.—*Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold,*

there was a dead man carried out, &c. "Behold," *i.e.* by accident, humanly speaking, Christ met the bier; but the meeting was foreseen and fore-ordained of Christ, that He might raise the dead to life He willed, however, that it should seem accidental and not designed, in order that it might be the more esteemed; for as the proverb runs, "that is of little value which is voluntarily offered for sale."

"*There was a dead man carried*" without the city. Because, for sanitary and other reasons, the Jews had their burial places without the walls.

So the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathæa, in which the body of Christ lay, was without Jerusalem. So also the valley of Jehoshaphat, the scene of the judgment to come and the general resurrection, is the common burial-place of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with the exception of the kings, for whom David had provided a sepulchre in Zion. 1 Kings ii. 10. For similar reasons the Romans, who were forbidden by the twelve tables to bury their dead within the city, used the Campus Martius as a place of sepulture, until Theodoric revoked the law; and there is abundant evidence to show that the Christians also, in the time of the persecution, used the crypts which they had excavated without the city for purposes of interment, but afterward, when peace was given to the Christians, they consecrated burial places within the walls near the temples in which they were wont to worship:

1. That the remembrance of death might be continually presented to the faithful as an incentive to a holy life. Like as the Spartans were commanded by Lycurgus to bury their dead within the city, in order to teach their young men that death was to be honoured and not to be feared.

2. That by their consecration they might be secure against the wiles of the devils, who are wont to dwell in the tombs and possess the bodies of those departed. S. Luke viii. 27.

3. And also that the faithful when on their way to worship might be led to pray that those who lay buried around might be released from purgatory, and counted worthy of a glorious resurrection at the last day, and also that they might be partakers in the holy sacrifices

offered in the temples and might benefit by the merits and by the prayers of those Saints who either lie buried, or are in some way especially commemorated therein. Thus Constantine the Great wished to be buried in the porch of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople, and Theodosius in the Church of S. Peter at Rome. And so, as most of the churches at Rome show, the Christians built altars over the tombs of the martyrs, for reasons which I have given in my comments on the text, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain." Rev. vi. 9.

The only son, μονογενὴς, *i.e.* the only child of his mother, and therefore the sole object of her love. For he was to her her hope and her future, the support of her declining years, and the light of her eyes. Hence the mother's grief was of the bitterest kind, like to that which the prophets tell of: "They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son," Zech. xii. 10. And again, "O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation." Jer. vi. 26.

And much people of the city was with her. This widow seems to have been a woman highly esteemed by her fellow-citizens, "out of respect for whom they joined in the funeral procession." S. Ambrose. Furthermore, there is generally at the gate of a city a great crowd of people going in and coming out, particularly as formerly the gate was not only the market-place, but also the seat of judgment.

Hence God willed that the miracle should be thus publicly wrought, that many being witnesses of it, many might be led to give praise to Him. Bede.

Ver. 13.—*And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said unto her, Weep not.* Nay, rather begin to rejoice, for I will restore your son to life again, mourn not as dead one whom thou shalt soon see brought back again to life. Bede. He forbids her to weep for him, who was about to rise from the dead, S. Ambrose.

Ver. 14.—*And He came and touched the bier: and He said*

Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. *The bier*, an open bier surely, as is common amongst the Jews.

Arise. Elijah, Elisha, and others restored the dead to life by means of prayer to God, but Christ at a word, as Lord of life and death, and therefore very God. He touched the bier, says Cyril, to show that his body was effectual for the salvation of men, for as iron heated in the fire does the work of fire, and kindles the chaff, so the flesh united to the Word gives life to mankind.

Ver. 15.—*And he that was dead sat up and began to speak.* *Sat up*, raised himself up into a sitting posture, and so returned to life; for to sit up and to begin to speak are sure signs of returning animation.

And He delivered him to his mother, i.e. He took him by the hand and placed him on his feet, then led him to his mother. Behold thy son! Take him home with thee, that thou mayest rejoice over him, and that he may render thee true filial obedience.

Ver. 16.—*And there came a fear on all.*

Ver. 17.—*And this rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.* Fear, *i.e.* reverence, and a sacred awe, mixed with admiration and joy.

A great prophet. The Messiah, of whose coming all were in anxious expectation.

Allegorically. The widow is the Church who mourns her sons—those who have fallen into mortal sin and forfeited the grace of God—as dead, and seeks by her tears for their restoration; and in answer to her prayers, Christ—1. Causes the bearers to stand still, checks those evil passions which gain the mastery over the young, and breaks their power. 2. Touches the bier, *i.e.* the wood of the Cross, and by it raises the dead to life. For by virtue of Christ sinners are moved to repentance, and restored to favour with God. Hence, 3. The dead man sits up and begins to speak, begins to lead a new life and give praise unto God, so that those who are witnesses of this marvellous change are filled with admiration and are led to give glory unto God. So S. Ambrose and others.

Of this we have a living example in S. Monica, for she mourned unceasingly for her son, who was dead in trespasses and sins, but recalled by her prayers to such holiness of life that he afterwards became a chief doctor of the Church. S. Augustine, *Confessions*.

Again, more particularly, the widow is the Church, the son the people of the Gentiles enclosed in the bier of concupiscence, and borne along to hell as to a sepulchre. By touch of the bier, *i.e.* by the wood of the Cross, Christ gave life to the world.

Figuratively. By the example of the widow we see how a priest or director should act when any of his spiritual children have fallen into mortal sin and are being borne to the grave of everlasting misery. He should follow the bier with weeping and much lamentation, for thus he will receive comfort from the Lord who—(1.) Touching the bier will cause the bearers to stand still, *i.e.* cause evil lusts and passions to cease; (2.) will recall the dead to life; and (3.) will raise him up to the performance of good works, so as to confess his sins and tell of the loving-kindness of God.

Thus at last he is restored to the Church, his mother, whose past sorrow will be eclipsed by her present joy, and thus also many will be led to extol the goodness of God.

Again, the widow represents the soul, her son the understanding, inactive and dead. When such a soul laments her spiritual death, especially if others also join in her mourning, Christ will grant an awakening. The bier is a conscience in a state of false security. The bearers, the evil enticements and flatteries of companions which stand still, *i.e.* are restrained at the touch of Christ. Bede. Or, as Theophylact interprets it, the widow is the soul which has lost its husband, *i.e.* the word of life; the son is the understanding; the body, the coffin or bier.

To sum up. We read that Christ on three occasions recalled the dead to life.

1. The daughter of the ruler of the synagogue in the house, *i.e.* one who sins in thought and intention.

2. The son of the widow at the gate, *i.e.* one who sins openly, and imparts his guilt to others.

3. Lazarus in the tomb, the habitual sinner who lies as it were buried in sin without hope of recovery or release.

The first, Christ raised to life by secret prayer apart from others; the second by a word; the third by crying with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. Hence different degrees of sin have different remedies, but to rescue the habitual sinner from the death of sin there needs no less than the voice of Christ speaking loudly to the sinner's heart.

Ver. 29.—*And the publicans justified God.* Confessed the goodness of God in sending the Baptist, and in offering them salvation through his baptism and preaching. See verse 35; 1 Tim. iii. 16; and S. Matt. xi. 19.

There is a question whether this verse and the one following give the words of the Evangelist or of our Lord Himself. But as the opening words of the 31st verse, "and the Lord said," are absent from the best MSS., we may conclude, with Maldonatus, that these two verses are a part of the continuous discourse of Christ.

Ver. 30.—*But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves,* either within themselves, *i.e.* in their hearts, because they did not dare openly contravene His words, or as against themselves, *i.e.* for their own condemnation. Bede.

Ver. 36.—*And one of the Pharisees desired that He would eat with him, and He went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meat.*

Ver. 37.—*And behold a woman in the city.* Behold, a wonderful thing, and a wonderful example of penitence. A woman called Mary Magdalene. S. Luke viii. 2. It is questioned whether this is the same woman who is mentioned by the two other Evangelists. S. Chrysostom thinks there were two; Origen, Theophylact, and Euthymius, three who thus anointed our Lord, and that each Evangelist wrote of a different person. S. Matt. xxvi. 7; S. John xii. 3.

But I hold that it was one and the same woman—Mary Magdalene, the sister of Martha and of Lazarus, who anointed our Lord, as we read in the Gospels, on two but not three occasions; and this is clear,—

1. Because this is the general interpretation of the Church, who in her Offices accepts what is here written by S. Luke as referring to the Magdalene alone.

2. Because S. John (xi. 2) writes, "It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick," thus plainly alluding to this passage of S. Luke, and signifying that only one woman anointed the Lord. For if there had been more than one, the words just quoted would have insufficiently described her. But the meaning is, "when I say Mary, I mean the penitent who anointed the feet of the Lord, as recounted by S. Luke, whom all know to be Mary Magdalene."

3. Because the Mary mentioned by S. John (xii. 2, 3) is clearly the same Mary Magdalene, the sister of Martha and of Lazarus, who anointed Christ here, as described by S. Luke, and again at Bethany, six days before the passover. For S. Matthew (xxvi. 6) and S. John (xii. 1) both refer to the same event, as is evident if the two accounts are compared together. Therefore it was Mary Magdalene who anointed Christ, not three times, as Origen would have us believe, but twice only, once as is recorded by S. Luke, and again six days before His death.

4. The same thing is testified to by Church history and tradition, and also by the inscription on the tomb of the Magdalene, which Maximus, one of the seventy disciples, is said to have built.

5. And this is also the opinion of S. Augustine, S. Cyprian, and many other interpreters of scripture.

But it may be objected that this Magdalene followed Jesus from Galilee (S. Matt. xxvii. 55), and was a Galilean, and cannot have been the same as Mary the sister of Martha, who lived at Bethany, and was therefore of Judæa. I answer that she was of Judæa by descent, but seems to have lived in Galilee, it may be in the castle called Magdala, either because she had married the lord of that place, or because it had been allotted her as her share of the family property. Hence she was called Magdalene from the name of the place, Magdala. So Jansenius and others.

In the city. Some think in Jerusalem. But Jerusalem was in Judæa, and these things seem to have been done in Galilee where Christ was preaching. Hence it is very probable that the city was Nain, the scene of Christ's miracle, as Toletus and others conjecture; but some think that it was the town of Magdala in which she lived, an idea which Adricomius on the word Magdalum supports.

A sinner. Some recent writers, to honour the Magdalene, think that she was not unchaste, but only conceited and vain, and for this reason called a sinner. But in proportion as they thus honour the Magdalene, they detract from the grace of God and that penitence which enabled her to live a holy life. For by the word sinner we generally understand one who not only sins, but leads others also to sin. The word sinner therefore here signifies a harlot, *i.e.* one who has many lovers although she may not make a public market of her charms, and this interpretation is accepted by S. Augustine, S. Jerome, Isidore of Pelusium, S. Ambrose, Gregory, Bede, and S. Chrysostom, who holds (*Hom.* 62 *ad Pop.*) that to her refer the words of our Lord, "Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." S. Matt. xxii. 31. Hence the Church hymn :—

So she, who hath so many sins committed,
Now from the very jaws of hell returns;
E'en to the threshold of a Life eternal,
After her fitful life of guilt and shame.

She, from a seething caldron of offences,
A fair and perfumed vase is now become;
From an uncomely vessel of dishonour
Translated to a vessel full of grace.

Doubtlessly Christ permitted her to be entangled in all the filth of a wanton life, that He might show the power of His grace in winning her back to purity again, for the worse the disease the greater the skill of the physician in curing it. Nor does this detract from the honour due to the Magdalene, for the greater her sins, the more admirable her penitence, and the stronger her resolution to forsake them.

God willed that she should be an example of penitence, that

none should despair of pardon because of the heinousness of their offences, but trust to the infinite compassion of God, mindful of the saying of S. Paul, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

"Truly," says S. Gregory, "a life anxious to atone for faults committed is oftentimes more pleasing to God than that innocence which rests in a torpid security."

Great, indeed, is the gift of innocence by which we are preserved from sin, but greater is the grace of penitence and remission of sin, and this grace is the greater in proportion to the greatness of the sin, for thus forgiveness is granted to the more unworthy, and so the grace becomes to him the greater, as S. Thomas teaches. Hence sinners who truly repent excel their brethren in humility, and in austerity and holiness of life, and often perform acts of heroism which those who have sinned less deeply are unable to do. As may be seen in the case of many saints, and especially in that of one who from a robber became the very mirror of monks. For the baseness of his former life, the baseness of his sin, the punishment due to his offences, and the pardoning love of God, are to the penitent so many incentives to a better and a holier life.

So the pearl is the emblem of penitence. For as the sun by its rays was said to convert the substance of the oyster into a precious jewel, so Christ by his transforming grace changed the woman that was a sinner into a pearl—a penitent saint.

When she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house. It was not fitting that the Magdalene, whose sinful life was known to all, should anoint Christ in her own house, but rather in the house of another, so that there might be no suspicion of evil. Hence she was not ashamed to act as she did in the house of the Pharisee; for, as S. Gregory says (*Hom.* 33), Being filled with shame within, she did not think there was any cause for the show of shame without.

And S. Augustine (*Hom.* 58 *de Temp.*) writes, The sinner who washed the feet of the Lord with her tears, and dried them with the hairs of her head, when she knew that the heavenly physician had come, entered the house an uninvited guest; and thus she, who had been shameless in sin, became yet more bold in seeking salvation, and so deserved to hear that her sins were forgiven. And again (*Hom.* 23), Thou hast seen how a woman of notoriously evil repute entered, uninvited, the house where her Physician sat at meat, and although little fitted for a feast, was fitted for the blessing which she thus boldly (piâ impudentiâ) sought to obtain. For she knew how great was her need, and that He to whom she had come, could grant her relief. For Christ accepted the invitation of the Pharisee, in order to provide those who sat at meat with the spiritual feast of the repentant Magdalene. Hence S. Chrysostom (*Serm.* 93): Christ sat at the feast, not to drink cups of wine flavoured with honey and perfumed with flowers, but the bitter tears of repentance; because God longs for the tears of the sinner. For, as S. Bernard says, the tears of penitence are the wine of angels, and yield them unbounded delight. And again (*Serm.* 30 *in Cant.*), Tears are an earnest of repentance, and a return to the blessing and favour of God, and therefore of sweet savour to His angels.

An alabaster box of ointment. See S. Matt. xxvi. 6.

Ver. 38. *And stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.*

At His feet. The ancients at their feasts reclined on couches, their heads resting on their hands, their feet turned away from the table, so that there might be room for others on the same couch. Hence it was easy for the Magdalene to fulfil her pious purpose, for tradition represents her as a woman of lofty stature.

She stood. Standing indicates not the posture, but the presence of any one.

She stood, i.e. she came, and fell on her knees, at the feet of Christ. For kneeling is the posture of penitence.

She drew nigh, says S. Augustine (*Hom.* 23), to the feet of the

Lord, and she who for long had taken to evil ways, now seeks to direct her steps aright. For humble contrition she weeps, and washes the feet of Christ, and in the devotion with which she wiped and anointed them, although silent, she speaks.

In the Magdalene therefore was fulfilled that which is written: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon;" also, "While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof," (Cant. i. 7–12); and further, "I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth" (Cant. iii. 2), which see.

Note here:—1. The reverence and modesty of the Magdalene, which is the grace of youth and of penitence. She drew nigh to Christ, not in front of Him, for she considered that she was, on account of her past misdeeds, unworthy of His holy presence, but at His feet. Therefore, S. Bernard accounts reverence or modesty (*Serm.* 86, *in Cant.*) to be the foundation of all virtues. "How great," he says, "is the grace and the beauty which a modest blush lends to the check!"

2. S. Mary Magdalene, as S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 11, *on S. Matt.*) observes, was the first who came to Jesus for pardon and forgiveness. Those before her had sought restoration to bodily health alone. Therefore, wounded like a deer, she, wounded by the dart of Christ's love, runs to Him for succour. Christ had showed her her wretchedness; hence, overcome with sorrow and remorse, she could not bear for one moment longer the burden of her sins, but at once sought of Him pardon and release. Therefore, without waiting until Christ had left the Pharisee's house, she burst in uninvited to the feast. So foul and loathsome is even one mortal sin alone. As S. Anselm asserts (*De Similit. cap.* cxc.), "If of necessity I had to choose between sin and the torments of hell, I had rather plunge headlong into hell, than give sin the mastery over me;" and he adds, "I had rather enter hell pure from the stain of sin, than reign in heaven a prey to its pollutions."

3. The act of S. Mary Magdalene seems as if prompted by the

words of the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," S. John i. 29; or by the invitation of Christ, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," S. Matt. xi. 28. Moreover, she was persuaded that He, who had delivered her from the possession of the seven devils (S. Luke viii. 2), would deliver her also from the bondage of sin. Therefore, in deepest contrition she draws nigh to Christ, acknowledging Him to be a prophet sent from God with power to forgive sins, and in full hope that He would pardon the guilt which she had contracted; for, S. Gregory says, Christ drew her to Himself by inward grace, and received her outwardly with pity and compassion.

And began to wash His feet with her tears. Observe how abundant were the tears of the penitent, inasmuch as they were able to wash and cleanse the dust-stained feet of the Lord. See S. Matt. x. 10. On their power and efficacy, S. Chrysostom has written (*Serm. de Pœnitentia*), and S. Ambrose, "Christ washed not His own feet, in order that we might wash them with our tears. Blessed tears, not only because they are able to wash away our guilt, but because they besprinkle the firstfruits of the heavenly Word, and incline His steps towards us."

Blessed tears, for they not only obtain pardon for the sinner, but strength and refreshment for the just. For truly is it written "My tears have been my meat day and night," Ps. xlii. 3. And S. Gregory (*Hom.* 33): "As I ponder over the penitence of the Magdalene, I long to keep silent and weep. For what heart so hard, as not to be softened by the tears of this penitent sinner, who considered what she had done, and was careless of what she would do—who entered unbidden to the feast, and wept amongst those who were feasting. Learn then how great must have been the compunction and sorrow which impelled her on such an occasion to weep."

And did wipe them with the hairs of her head. Other means were at hand, but in her deep penitence, the Magdalen would dedicate to the service of Christ the very hair which once she took such pride in adorning. Hence S. Cyprian (*De Ablutione*), She used her

hair for a napkin, her eyes for a pitcher, and her tears for water. Her contrition showed itself by her tears; her faith washed the feet of the Lord, her love anointed them. She made her head to be a foot-stool, and wiped the sacred feet with her unloosened hair. Without reserve, she gave herself to Christ, and He, regarding the intention rather than the act, anointed the anointer, cleansed her who was cleansing, and wiped away her sins.

S. Euthymius assigns the cause, "He makes instruments of sin, instruments of righteousness." And more particularly S. Gregory (*Hom.* 33), "That which she had given up to the service of sin, now she offers for the glory of God. Her eyes, which had lusted after earthly things, she wears away with the tears of repentance. Her hair, which once added to the comeliness of her face, she now used to dry up her tears. With her mouth, which was wont to speak proudly, she now kisses the ground on which the feet of the Lord trod. All her sinful indulgences she sacrifices for the love of Christ, and making her former vices give place to virtues, wherewith she offended therewith she now serves God."

Hear also S. Chrysostom (*Hom. 6, on S. Matt.*): "So the woman which was a sinner, inflamed with the fires of love, and purged by her flood of tears from the stains and defilement of sin, exceeded even the virtue of virgins. For in the warmth of her penitence she exulted in her longings for Christ; washing His feet with her tears, wiping them with the hairs of her head, and anointing them with ointment of price. Thus she acted outwardly, but how much more fervent were the thoughts of her heart, which were known only to God."

And kissed his feet. She who once delighted in the kisses of unchaste desire, now chastely kisses the feet of Christ, and seeks thereby the pardon and forgiveness of her sins. For a kiss is a sign of forgiveness, as well as of kindness and of love. S. Ambrose.

Mystically. The two feet of Christ, says S. Peter Damian, are mercy and judgment. To kiss one without the other is productive of rash security, or of an evil despair. Publicly, at a public feast,

in presence of all the guests, the Magdalene performed her act of penitence, that her openly avowed repentance might atone for the public scandal of her former life.

And anointed them with the ointment. The ancients made frequent use of ointments or perfumes. See Eccles. ix. 8. And these were generally prepared by women. 1 Sam. viii. 13.

The Magdalene boldly entered the house of Simon her friend at the time of the feast, that thus she might show the warmth of her love for Christ. Titus. For, as S. Paulinus says (*Epist.* 4, *ad Severum*), The Lord regarded not the ointment, but the love which impelled her, fearless of reproach or rejection, to enter uninvited the house of the Pharisee, and with that violence by which the kingdom of heaven is taken by force, she ran to the feet of Christ, and made them to be, if I may so express myself, her sanctuary and her altar. There she consecrated her tears—made offering of a sweet-smelling savour, and made sacrifice of her affections and passions; a broken and contrite heart, a sacrifice with which God is well-pleased. Therefore she not only obtained the forgiveness of her sins, but wheresoever the Gospel is preached, there what she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her.

Mystically. S. Peter Damian explains, that this ointment was made out of our sins; for she, mixed and macerated in the mortar of repentance, sprinkled with the oil of discernment, and softened in the caldron of discipline by the fires of remorse, is applied a precious and acceptable ointment to the Saviour's feet. He adds also that this ointment was fourfold, inasmuch as it was composed 1. of devotion; 2. many virtues; 3. piety; and 4. pity.

Note what a noble example of penitence and of virtue the Magdalene presents.

1. Her remarkable faith in believing that Christ was able to forgive sins, a power which the Scribes and Pharisees denied Him, and which no other prophet possessed. Hence if we may credit S. Augustine (*Hom.* 33), she believed that He who had power to forgive sins, was more than man, and was led by divine illumination to acknowledge Christ to be God; for, as S. Augustine goes on to

say, to believe that Christ can forgive sins, is to believe that He is God; and he adds, "She drew nigh unto the Lord impure, to return pure; sick, to return sound; a confessor of sin, to return a disciple of Christ."

2. Her wonderful devotion in continuing to kiss the feet of Jesus, and wash them with her tears until she heard Him say, "Thy sins are forgiven: go in peace."

3. Her great wisdom in not seeking pardon by the words of her mouth, but rather by the deep yearnings of her heart.

4. The depth of her penitence, in that for thirty years, after thus publicly showing her contrition, she lived in the desert a life given up to austerities and the practice of good works. Hence Petrarch writes:—

"Love and hope deep seated in the heart made cold and hunger sweet, and turned the hard rock into a pleasant couch;" and adds, "Here, unseen by men, but surrounded by bands of angels, and supported by the daily Offices, thou wast permitted to hear the responsive chantings of the angelic choirs." And so Christ revealed to S. Bridget that there were three saints specially pleasing to Him: the Blessed Virgin, John the Baptist, and Mary Magdalene, of whom He spake thus:—When Mary Magdalene was converted, the devils said, 'How shall we gain power over her again, for we have lost a goodly prey? We cannot look at her because of her tears; so covered and protected is she by good works, that no spot or soil of sin can stain her soul; so holy is her life, so fervent her love for God, that we dare not draw nigh her.'"

Figuratively, S. Ambrose (*lib. de Tobia, cap.* xii.), says, "Whoso hath pity on the poor anoints the feet of Christ. For the poor are His feet, and on them He harmlessly walks."

Ver. 39.—*Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner*, and therefore unfit to touch a holy prophet. This Pharisee was, as S. Augustine says (*Serm.* 23), one of those self-righteous men, of whom Isaiah wrote, chap. lii. 11.

But Simon's reasoning was false, for the unclean touched Christ that they might be cleansed by Him. For this cause He came into the world, that as the good physician, He might heal all manner of diseases, whether of the body or of the soul. He was offended, therefore, because, as Euthymius says, he knew not that Christ, although very God, was made man to save sinners. And, again, the Magdalene was not now unclean, for she had been cleansed by contrition, as Christ proceeded to show. Simon was deceived, because he judged of the past, and not of the present. For Mary was the same, yet another. Another, yet her very self, says Chrysologus (*Serm.* 74). Wherefore the humble penitent was holier than the proud Pharisee, who, if he had not already sinned as deeply as the Magdalene, was liable from his spiritual pride to fall into as great a sin. S. Augustine (*in loc. cit.*). Hence in many things the Pharisee offended, as Toletus shows. Therefore, S. Gregory (*Hom.* 33), concludes thus: "We should in another's fall lament our own sin; for perhaps, under similar circumstances, we should in like manner offend, and although punishment should always follow on sin, we ought to make a distinction, to be harsh and severe in our treatment of vice, but to be compassionate to the weakness of human nature. For though the sinner must be punished, he must be gently dealt with, as our neighbour."

Ver. 40.—*And Jesus answering* (the secret thoughts of his heart) *said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.*

S. Augustine, Theophylact, Bede and others, think that this Simon was not Simon the leper, in whose house the Magdalene again anointed the feet of Jesus. S. John xii. 2, S. Matt. xxvi. 6. Others are of a contrary opinion, because the name is the same, and because the circumstances of the second anointing are so similar. It seems, however, that this Simon was converted when Christ was on his way from Galilee to Judæa (S. Matt. xix. 1); and that he followed Jesus, and settled at Bethany, near S. Mary Magdalene, who was known to him, in order to enjoy with her the presence and teaching of Christ.

I have somewhat to say unto thee. See how wisely Christ reproves

Simon with these gentle but meaning words, which appealed to his better feelings, and at once arrested his attention. For, as S. Augustine says, Christ desired to correct the error of his thoughts, in return for the entertainment which he had provided. And S. Luke implies that Simon at once recognised his fault, for he answered modestly, Master, say on. As Thy disciple, I will gladly accept Thy words as the teaching of my Master.

Ver. 41.—*There was a certain creditor which had two debtors.* The debtors, says S. Ambrose, are those who owe God, the heavenly creditor, not actual money, but a return of good works and of virtue. Our debts, therefore, are our sins, by which we do despite to God, and for which we should make atonement. But we cannot make atonement unto God, and therefore are in danger of hell fire. For the Syriac creditor implies the same as usurer, and the Greek word δανιστὴς answers to the Hebrew נשה, nosche, and signifies one who gives, either outright, or on usury. Deut. xv. 6, xxviii. 12; Ecclus. xxix. 1 and 2.

One owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. The Roman denarius or penny, originally of the value of ten asses, was worth about eight pence of our modern money. In this parable we are to understand by the two debtors, Mary Magdalene, and Simon the Pharisee; who is not mentioned by name, lest he should be offended or disheartened. This is clear from the following verses wherein the Magdalene is thrice, by antithesis, brought into comparison with Simon, and preferred to him. She, therefore, is the debtor who owed five hundred pence, who considered that she owed God much more because of her sins than Simon; and therefore, that she might obtain forgiveness, she loved more and showed greater proofs of her love. But Simon owed only fifty pence, his sins were but venial, and therefore he considered that he owed little to God. He was self-righteous, and thought that he had little or no need of repentance.

But S. Augustine rightly observes, for this very reason he ought all the more to acknowledge that he was a debtor to God, who had preserved him from committing greater offences. Thou wast not an adulterer (as the Magdalene) in that past life of thine

which thou dost ignore. But it was God who kept thee from sinning, preserved thee from temptation, and from the power of the tempter. Acknowledge then what thou owest to Him who has kept thee from evil. For there is no sin which one man has committed that another man may not commit, if God withdraw His guidance from him.

Ver. 42.—*And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?* (loves him most, Vulg.) *i.e.* "in verity," or "ought" to love him most. For a similar Hebraism, see Amos v. 13. The prudent shall keep silence in that time, *i.e.* they were being silent or it behoved them to be silent.

The meaning is, As he who has been forgiven much, is accounted to have received forgiveness because of his deserts, so debtors who owe much, are wont to show the utmost deference to their creditors, in order to obtain from them, if not forgiveness of their debt, at least favourable terms of payment. In like manner, Simon, thou shouldest have known that the Magdalene loved me with a greater love than thine. For she showed greater proofs of her love, and therefore her sins, which are many, are forgiven, because she loved much. Wherefore, she is no longer a sinner, nor, as thou thinkest, unworthy to touch my feet; but holier than thou, and more worthy to be touched by me. The parable, therefore, plainly teaches us, that the more we love, the more we shall be forgiven.

So S. Augustine (*Hom.* 23), "The more she loved Me, and shows her love, the more do I forgive." But if we take the Greek rendering ἀγαπήσει, and translate according to the English version, the argument is inverted. For although the love of the creditor, as shown in the forgiveness of the debt, excites in return the love of the debtor, yet at the same time it is the love of the debtor, in seeking to make payment of the debt, which causes the creditor to forgive. So De Lyra, Francis Lucas, and others. Hence the parable in one sense teaches us, that as the debtor who has been forgiven the most, loves his creditor the more, so Christ because he had forgiven the

many sins of the Magdalene, will be the more beloved by her. But Christ desired also to show, not only that her sins were forgiven, but the reason, and the manner of their forgiveness, *i.e.* on account of her love, so that we, taking example by her, may, in like manner obtain forgiveness.

Another explanation is given by S. Ambrose (*De Tobia, cap.* xxii.) Christ forgave the sins of the Magdalene, which increased her love and gratitude to Him; but Christ foresaw this increase of love, and therefore from the very first forgave her. Again, S. Gregory (*lib.* vi. *epist.* 22), and after him Toletus: The greater the debt which is forgiven the greater the gratitude of the debtor. When, therefore, O Simon, thou sawest in the Magdalene such great signs of love, thou shouldest have inferred how much had been forgiven her. For as the cause may be inferred from the effect, so her love was the result of her forgiveness. See then how rashly thou hast condemned this woman, when thou shouldest have known, from the abundant signs of love and gratitude which she had shown, that all her sins, however great their number, had been forgiven. But this interpretation is at variance with the 47th verse, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much." The word "for" or "because" shows that her love was not the effect but the cause of her forgiveness. See *infra*, v. 47.

Ver. 43.—*Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.* Christ praises the answer, in order that Simon might the more readily accept the reproof and the lessons to be drawn therefrom.

Ver. 44.—*And He turned unto the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman?* He turned, because the Magdalene stood behind Him, for from consciousness of her guilt, she did not dare to meet His sight. Seest thou this woman? no longer, as thou thinkest, a sinner, but a penitent reconciled with God.

I entered into thine house, but thou gavest Me no water for My feet. It was the custom in those days to wash the feet of one's guests before they sat down to meat, both for purposes of cleansing and refreshment. Thus Abraham washed the feet of the Angels, Gen.

xviii. 4, and Lot, Gen. xix. 2. See also Judges xix. 21. Whence S. Paul considers that a widow may be set apart for the service of God, "if she have washed the saints' feet," 1 Tim. v. 10.

Christ had come as a guest to the house, and therefore Simon should have washed His feet. Christ therefore reproached him for his want of consideration and care, and contrasts his conduct with the love of the Magdalene. For Titus says, "It is an easy matter to provide water, but difficult to supply such an abundance of tears."

Ver. 45.—*Thou gavest Me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet,* "with reverence and godly fear." Titus. Guests were in old times received with a kiss in sign of affection and welcome. But Simon omitted this salutation. Hence "It was thy duty, O Simon, to receive Me, thy invited guest, with a kiss of welcome, but the Magdalene has more than made up for thy neglect, for she hath continued to kiss, not My face, but My feet, from the moment I entered Thy house."

Ver. 46.—*My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment.* The more valued the guest, the more precious the perfumes wherewith He was anointed. Thou didst not anoint My head, but she hath anointed My feet with very precious ointment. See again how she excelleth thee in love and devotion. "Not that the Lord," as Ambrose says, "valued the ointment, but rather the love, the faith, and the humility." Hence Christ concludes,

Ver. 47.—*Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.* Greek, ἀφέωνται, have been forgiven. At what time, we may ask, were her sins forgiven?

1. Francis Lucas thinks at the time when the Lord said unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven," v. 48.

2. Others are of opinion that her sins were forgiven when our Lord in this present verse declared unto Simon the fact of her pardon.

3. But it seems more probable that her sins were forgiven at some time antecedent, *i.e.* when she felt true contrition for her offences. Because when by the grace of God she had been led to see the

heinousness of her sin, so deep was her contrition and sorrow, that she thereby regained the divine favour, and so her love for God and her sorrow for her sins impelled her to show openly the reality of her repentance, and therefore before Christ could say unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven," she had obtained forgiveness by reason of her complete penitence.

We may, however, take the words "her sins are forgiven" as spoken in the same sense in which the priest pronounces absolution over a penitent, who is already reconciled to God by his perfect repentance. The priest absolves him who is already absolved, and this absolution is so effectual as to do away with any sin which might still attach itself to the penitent. Further, a sin often repeated may be often forgiven, if the penitent confesses his fault as often as he commits it, and seeks absolution at the hands of the Church. Hence Christ for the third time forgives the sins of the Magdalene. Wherefore He freed her not only from the guilt but from the punishment of sin, and granted her free release.

This is what the angel said to a certain Bishop of the Church: "Penitence and confession restore the penitent to the number of the elect." Again, "The tears of a penitent may well bear the name of a baptism." Barlaam. And Palladius tells us, that a certain virgin who had fallen into sin "was more pleasing to God in her penitence, than in her former purity." See also S. Jerome (*De pœnitentia Fabiolæ*); and Climacus (*De pœnitentia.*)

For she loved much. Toletus and some others think that the word "for" signifies not the cause but rather affords the proof of her forgiveness. "Thou mightest have known, O Simon, that her sins were forgiven, for these open signs of love are bestowed on Me in gratitude for my forgiveness of her sins."

But this explanation is faulty, because the Magdalene knew not that she had been forgiven, until she heard Christ pronounce the pardon of her sins. And Christ does not say, Learn from her acts of love that her sins have been forgiven, but on the contrary, Her sins are forgiven because of her love.

Hence the cause of the Magdalene's forgiveness was her great love

for God, which led her to hate and abhor her former sins. For love is the death of sin, and the life of righteousness. S. Augustin (*De laudibus charitatis.*) Hence all theologians hold with him, that the act of perfect contrition which includes the entire surrender of the heart to God, precedes, but at once brings with it justification and forgiveness of sin as its final result, in the same way as a certain amount of heat (*calor ut octo*) applied to wood, as a result produces actual fire in that wood.

So the Council of Trent (*Sess.* xiv. *cap.* iv.), distinguishing between the attrition caused by fear of punishment and the contrition which follows on the love of God, decides that the latter, in conjunction with the sacrament of penance, reconciles the sinner with God, which the former is in no wise able to do; for "a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," Ps. li. 17. Hence S. Gregory (*Hom.* 33) explains, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much, *i.e.* she burnt off the corruptions of sin, because she was inflamed with the fire of love. For the more the heart of the sinner burns with the love of God the more is he purified from the lust and corruption of sin."

But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. This refers to the Pharisee, because he obtained no forgiveness, inasmuch as he showed no signs of penitence or of love for God. Our Lord, under reserve, saith little or "less," as the Vulgate renders it, is forgiven, though he might have said "nothing" is forgiven. But by the words "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little," we may understand:

1. That, according to the principles on which God forgives sins, "one mortal sin, even though it be the least, cannot be forgiven without its accompanying sins being forgiven also, and whensoever one is forgiven, the others are forgiven as far as the guilt is concerned, but more or less of punishment is meted out, according to the degree of love which fills the heart of the penitent."

2. That he who has no love for God, or only that natural love which well nigh all men possess, loves God less than one whose ove is divinely inspired. Hence to the one many, *i.e.* all his sins,

are pardoned; to the other less, *i.e.* nothing, is forgiven. All was forgiven the Magdalene because she was truly contrite, and sought forgiveness by every means in her power; but the Pharisee received no forgiveness, because he felt no sorrow for sin, and had not even given the feast with any desire of obtaining mercy from Christ.

For Christ designed the parable to apply to S. Mary Magdalene and also to the Pharisee, and willed from it to show why the one was forgiven but the other not. S. Augustine adds, "The parable was spoken because the Pharisee thought he had few, if any sins, not because he had no love, for he showed some love in that he invited our Lord." And again, "O Pharisee, thou lovest little, not because little is forgiven thee, but because thou thoughtest that there was little which needed forgiveness." Toletus remarks, "Little was forgiven Simon, because by the grace of God he had been preserved from committing sin, for he had entertained Christ, and not persecuted him as the other Pharisees. Hence it is very probable that afterwards this Pharisee became a true follower of Christ." See further Suarez, *Parte* iii., *de Gratia*, lib. viii. cap. x.

Ver. 48.—*And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.* Francis Lucas thinks that the Magdalene's sins were at this time and by these words forgiven. See preceding verse. Christ now turns to the Magdalene, and repeats that which He had said just before to Simon, in order to comfort her grief, to confirm her pardon, and show that He had power and authority to forgive sins, and that He therefore was the Messiah, and God. Euthymius.

Ver. 49.—*And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, i.e.* to reason in their hearts, for they did not dare to express their thoughts lest they should be put to rebuke.

Who is this that forgiveth sins also? Is it the Messiah? Is it God, for God alone can forgive sins! Christ leaves them a prey to wonder and to doubt, in order that they might be led to inquire into His life, doctrine and miracles, and see in Him the Son of God.

Ver. 50.—*And He saith to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.* Faith, not alone, as the innovators hold, but fruitful in

good works, such as the Magdalene had displayed, and love. For a little before, v. 47, Christ had ascribed her forgiveness to her love. We must here understand, therefore, not a barren faith, but a faith which showed itself in her acts of contrition and love.

Hath saved thee, i.e. hath freed thee from sin, and made thee meet for salvation. Thy loving faith hath placed thee in the way of salvation, and if thou continuest therein, thou wilt lay hold upon eternal life, for a readiness to serve God is the way to glory.

Go in peace. Be no longer downcast and distressed by reason of thy sins: they have now no power to hurt thee, nor to make thy conscience afraid. Euthymius. The fruit of repentance, forgiveness, and of a conscience void of offence, is peace and spiritual joys, which far exceed those which the world can give, as it is written, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God" Rom. v. 1; and again, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ," Phil. iv. 7. So also, "He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast," Prov. xv. 15.

S. Bernard, in his sermon on the Magdalene, very fitly remarks, "The joy which a perfect heart looks for from an untroubled conscience is a lasting happiness. For the heart which is cleansed from this world's corruptions, and whose desires are fixed on God, joys only in the Lord, and rejoices only in God its Saviour. The soul of such an one despises the threats of the enemy, casts away fear, is not a prey to false hopes, but, secure against all evil, rests in perfect peace."

This perfect peace Christ gave to the Magdalene, for God's work is perfect (Deut. xxxii. 4), and therefore those whom Christ cleansed were made perfectly whole. He therefore,

1. Uprooted from the Magdalene's heart all vicious habits, all evil recollections and fleshly lusts, and restored to her true peace of mind.

2. Endued her, not only with chastity, humility and penitence, but also with,

3. A contempt for earthly things, and a love for heavenly; and

4. Kindled in her heart an ardent love, which caused her to dedicate herself and all she had to His service.

Hence she followed Christ as He went about the villages preaching, and ministered unto Him of her substance, resigning the cares of the family to her sister Martha, that she might wholly devote herself to the teaching of the Lord.

Hence she heard from His lips the words, "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her," S. Luke xi. 42. Hence also she stood at the foot of the Cross, and beheld Christ washing away, by His blood, those sins which she had washed with her tears, and afterwards, with a yet more fervent love, withdrawing into the desert, she gave herself up to the contemplation of His life, His passion and His resurrection, and, wholly devoted to His service, lived henceforth for heaven and not for earth.

Such also was the conversion of S. Paul, and therefore he was endued with all Christian and Apostolic virtues. See Acts ix. A similar conversion of heart and mind, we are told, was experienced by S. Cyprian at his baptism (*Lib.* ii. *Epist.* 2, *ad Donat.*); and by S. Augustin (*Confess. lib.* ix. *cap.* i., *lib.* viii. *cap.* ii.)

Wherefore Origen, in his noble Homily on the Magdalene, figuratively says, "We may follow the example of this woman, in order to obtain a similar blessing. For we may confidently draw nigh unto Jesus, since He did not withdraw Himself from the sinner who sought Him. Learn then from her, O sinner, to mourn over the absence of God from thy soul, and to seek His presence again. Learn from Mary to love Jesus, to hope in Jesus, and by seeking Jesus to find Him. Learn from her to fear no opposition, to refuse to be comforted without Him, and to count all things but loss for His sake. Hence see the power of grace, and of the love of Christ."

"Love conquers all things." "Love can control the savage lion, and love alone has power to lead captive the hearts of men," for "love is strong as death," Cant. viii. 6.

CHAPTER VIII.

3 *Women minister unto Christ of their substance.* 4 *Christ, after he had preached from place to place, attended with his apostles, propoundeth the parable of the sower.* 16 *And of the candle.* 21 *Declareth who are his mother, and brethren.* 22 *Rebuketh the winds.* 26 *Casteth the legion of devils out of the man into the herd of swine.* 37 *Is rejected of the Gadarenes.* 43 *Healeth the woman of her bloody issue.* 49 *And raiseth from death Jairus' daughter.*

AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God : and the twelve *were* with him,

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable :

5 A sower went out to sow his seed : and as he sowed, some fell by the way side ; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock ; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be ?

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God : but to others in parables ; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this : The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the way side are they that hear ; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy ; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth *it* on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *anything* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

19 Then came to him *his* mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

20 And it was told him *by certain* which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were all waiting for him.

41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind *him*, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanched.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press *thee*, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard *it*, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

56 And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Ver. 1.—*And the twelve* (apostles) *were with Him, i.e.* they accompanied Jesus as He went through the cities and villages preaching.

Ver. 2.—*And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.* These women followed Christ (1.) out of gratitude, because He had healed their diseases, and cast out the devils which possessed them. (2.) For safety, lest if they were away from their physician, their former ills might again overtake them. (3.) From pious motives, that from His companionship and preaching they might advance in holiness.

Mary. In Hebrew, Mary signifies a "bitter sea" of repentance. Bede.

Called Magdalene. As we have before explained, from the castle or fort near Bethsaida and Capernaum. S. Augustin infers that she was a married woman (*Hom.* 33), and therefore calls her not a harlot but an adulteress. But according to S. Jerome, the author of the commentary on S. Mark calls her a widow, which is much the same thing; so also Jansenius, Luke and others. That she was an inhabitant of Judæa, and like Lazarus and Martha lived at Bethany, is clear from S. John xii. 1. Adricomius, in his description of the Holy Land, tells us that the Magdalene's home was situated on the shore of the sea of Galilee, and towards the north-east looks out on an extensive plain, and that it was called Magdala from the battlements and towers, wherewith it was fortified. Hence Jerome asserts that she was rightly called Magdalene, that is to say, "turreted" because of her zeal and love. Josephus makes mention of this castle, and tells us that Agrippa fruitlessly sent an expedition against it.

In the Hebrew then Magdalene signifies (1.) turreted, or tower-bearing, from the root מגרל migdol, a tower; for she was tall of stature, and of a yet loftier mind. "Thy neck is like the tower of David," Cant. iv. 4. (2.) Or "magnificent" (Origen), or "magnified," according to Pagninus, because, says Origen, she followed Jesus, ministered unto Him, and beheld the mystery of His Passion. For the root ערל gadal, means, "to be great and magnificent," and

the Magdalene was greatly exalted by Christ. (3.) Pagninus says that Magdalene means, "remarkable for the standard," "bearing or raising the standard," from the root רעל deghol, which, when the letters ghimel and daleth are transposed, signifies a standard. For the Magdalene raised the standard of penitence and love, and of the contemplative life. Like as we read, "His banner over me was love," Cant. ii. 4. (4). Or otherwise, as the same writer remarks, the name means, "brought up, nourished," *i.e.* led by the teaching of Christ to a holy and a virtuous life. For the Hebrew גדל gadal means the same thing as to nourish and bring up.

Out of whom went seven devils, i.e. seven capital sins, pride, avarice, gluttony, luxury, anger, envy, and careless living. Bede, Theophylact and S. Gregory. For in a literal sense we are to understand that she had been possessed by devils or evil spirits, as I have before said, and that they had gone out of her, or (S. Mark xvi. 9) been cast out. So teach S. Ambrose, Euthymius, Jansenius, and others.

We may conclude, therefore, that the Magdalene, because of her wickedness and sins, had been possessed by seven devils, and that with other demoniacs she had been made whole by Christ; that on her repentance she had obtained pardon and forgiveness, and, no longer under the power of Satan, but filled with the spirit of God, she devoted her whole after life to the service of Christ. John of Rochester and others.

Seven devils, either seven in actual number, or "seven" in the sense of many, or all; for, as I have often pointed out, "seven" is the sign of multitude or totality.

Ver. 3.—*And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward* (manager or treasurer, according to the Arabic version) *and Susanna, and many others which ministered unto Him of their substance.* For they were rich, and grateful to their deliverer, and therefore sought to further His preaching, and to spread the faith.

So SS. Plautilla, Priscilla, and many other rich and noble matrons ministered unto SS. Peter, Paul, Clement, and other Roman Pontiffs, and other orders of the clergy.

And Susanna, an illustrious woman who, healed by Christ, had

become His disciple. Her name in the Hebrew signifies "a lily." On account of the sweet radiance of a heavenly life (Interlinear Gloss), and the golden fervour of her inward affection. Bede.

Ver. 15.—*Which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it.* The Council of Basle observes that for the right hearing of the word of God there is required,

1. A place fitted to receive it, *i.e.* an honest and good heart.
2. A proper disposition, to "keep" the word when heard; and
3. That best return, fruit brought forth with patience.

A heart is honest and good, says Lyranus, because of the faith which illumines it, and good (optimum) in a higher sense because of grace working in it; or, as others hold, it is "bonum" because disciplined and exercised in virtue, and "optimum" because of inward peace and consolation. Again, it is "bonum" because purified from sin, and "optimum" because conformed to the will of God (Albertus Magnus); or "bonum" in discerning the truth, and "optimum" in its desire of that which is right (Bonaventura); or, according to S. Augustin on Ps. vii., "bonum" on account of the love it bears its neighbour and itself, "optimum" on account of its exceeding love for God.

Hence we may take the Greek, καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ, to mean the same as the Vulgate "bono et optimo," for the copula καὶ, or "et," signifies gradation and increase. They, therefore, who keep the word of God in an honest and good heart bring forth fruit in proportion: good fruit if the heart is good, better if the heart is better, and the best fruit if the heart is perfect, *i.e.* thirty fold, sixty fold, or one hundred fold. S. Matt. xiii. 8. And it does not follow of necessity, as Toletus holds, that these words apply to different persons, for the heart of a believer may grow in grace, until at last it is "optimum," perfect in sight of God.

With patience, ἐν ὑπομονῇ, *i.e.* in the endurance of labour, disappointment, and sorrow in the plowing, seeding, and harrowing of the soul, and in the long expectation of harvest.

Ver. 26.—*And they arrived at* (sailed over to) *the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.*

Gadarenes. Gergesenes (S. Matt.), or as it is written in some MSS., Gerasenes. Some think that one and the same place is here signified, but Adricomius shows that Gadara, and Gerasa or Gergesa were two distinct cities, but that the surrounding country was named indifferently after either.

The Vulgate translates "the country of the Gerasenes," because this was the best known name.

Ver. 27.—*And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.*

"*A man.*" S. Matt. says there were two. But as this one was the fiercer, and possessed by a legion, S. Luke and S. Mark mention him alone.

But in the tombs. 1. The Jews, as I have before said, had their burial places without their cities. Their tombs were large and lofty chambers as it were, so as to afford burial to many, and to be easy of access to the friends and relatives of the departed. This is clear from what we read of the sepulture of Christ, of Abraham, Sarah, and others.

This demoniac then was driven by the devils which possessed him to dwell among the tombs. For these reasons:

1. In order to excite him to greater ferocity, and that he might be the cause of greater fear to the passers-by.

Probably he was like what the French fable to be a "loup-garou," *i.e.* a man who after the manner of a wolf sallies forth by night and preys upon men and animals, while by day he hides himself in tombs and by hollows of the rocks. "So that no man might pass by that way" (S. Matt. viii. 28), because passers-by were attacked and wounded by him. The evil spirits were mostly wont to attack those of a melancholy disposition of mind, as the more easily driven into the madness of despair.

2. Because unclean spirits love to dwell in unclean places. Hence witches hold their sabbaths underneath the gallows.

3. Because the devils rejoice at the death of men, and triumph over the souls of them who are condemned to hell.

4. S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact add that he dwelt amongst the tombs, to persuade men that the souls of the dead are changed into devils, who abide in the sepulchres wherein their bodies are buried. Hence demoniacs from time to time have cried out, I am the soul of Peter, or of Paul, or of John.

Ver. 28.—*When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before Him.* S. Mark (chap. v. 6), adds, "And when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him," *i.e.* bent the knee before Him. Because he felt the power of Christ's presence, and was therefore compelled to draw nigh and worship Him, for fear lest, if he acknowledged not the Lord, he might receive greater punishment; and again, Christ caused him to act thus in order that an opportunity might be afforded for his cure.

Son of God most high. It would seem that the devil, who in the temptation had not recognised Christ, now after so many miracles acknowledged Him to be the Messiah, the Son of God; yet, blinded by pride and hatred, he hesitated to believe that the Son of God had stooped to take upon Him our flesh, and thought it impossible that by His death upon the Cross the whole human race could be redeemed, because, as Aquinas remarks, in many ways God had hindered him from recognising the truth. See S. Mark iv. 12.

Torment me not. Do not cast me out and bind me for ever in hell. See S. Matt. viii. 31.

Ver. 29.—*For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.* From this and similar passages it is clear that the devils are permitted by God to dwell on earth and tempt mankind.

Hence it is the custom of the Church to bury the bodies of the faithful in consecrated ground in order that they may rest therein free from the assaults of evil spirits, and may profit by the prayers of the living.

Ver. 30.—*And Jesus asked him, i.e.* one of the devils, *saying, What is thy name?* For Christ willed that the evil spirit should declare his name, that from it the number of the devils, and thence the mightiness of the power which expelled them, might be known.

And he said, Legion. A legion was composed of 6000 men, and S. Ambrose thinks that this was the exact number of the devils; others, following the Scripture, take the word generally as meaning "many," "because many devils were entered into him."

S. Gregory of Nyssa adds, "The devils, imitating the angelic host, call themselves Legion; nay more, they would liken themselves to God Himself, who is called the Lord God of Sabaoth, *i.e.* the Lord of Hosts. For Satan is the counterfeit and mockery of God."

Learn then how great must be the number and the malignity of the devils, that so many should possess one man. So we read in the life of S. Dominic, that very many devils were cast out of a man by his prayers and entreaties.

Therefore, since we are surrounded on all sides by so many spiritual foes, we must give ourselves continually to watching and prayer, in order to obtain the victory over them, as Antony, who was wont to say that all temptations could be overcome by the Cross of Christ, by calling on Him, and by praying in the spirit.

Wherefore if any one determines to serve God perfectly, let him be well assured that he has arrayed against him, not one legion of devils only, but many, even Satan himself, and all the dwellers in hell. Hence the Apostle (Eph. vi. 12), "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Following the example of Christ, S. Hilarion is said to have healed a demoniac possessed by Legion. It is said that after he prayed to the Lord that He would release the afflicted man from his misery, there were heard various voices proceeding from the mouth of the demoniac, and as it were the clamour of much people. And straightway the demoniac was healed, and presented himself not long after with his wife and children at the monastery, bearing gifts in gratitude for his cure.

Ver. 31.—*And they besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep.* For although the devils, whilst they go to and fro on earth, are consumed by the fires of hell, yet it is some

gratification, to them that they are not shut up in prison, but are permitted to tempt men to sin, and make them sharers in their condemnation. For they hate God and envy men, because men are heirs of that kingdom from which they by pride fell. Emmanuel Sa very appropriately remarks, "God has appointed a punishment suited to each sin. Hell for the lusts of the flesh; gnashing of teeth for ribald laughter; thirst for self-indulgence and gluttony; the worm for an evilly disposed heart; darkness for ignorance and self-deceit; the deep for pride, and therefore for the devil and his angels.

Ver. 32.—*And there was there an herd of many swine* (about two thousand, S. Mark v. 11) *feeding on the mountain* (nigh unto the mountain, S. Mark, *ibid.*). But for what purpose were these swine, inasmuch as they were forbidden to the Jews by the law of Moses? Gadara, although a city of Judæa or rather of Galilee, had, according to Josephus, been assigned by Cæsar for a dwelling-place to the Syrians and Gentiles; who were not prohibited from keeping swine. And again, the Jews might have been feeding the swine, not for their own eating, but for other purposes: to sell them to the Gentiles for the use of the Roman soldiery, or in order to provide lard for the greasing of their chariot wheels.

And they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them. The devils made this request:

1. In order that, inasmuch as they were unable to injure men directly, they might injure them indirectly through their property or possessions.

2. That, as actually came to pass, they might stir up the ill-will of the inhabitants against Christ.

3. Because unclean spirits delight in unclean things. Hence the devil is said to be worshipped by the witches in form of a he-goat. But from this entreaty S. Antony, according to S. Athanasius, infers the powerlessness of the devils. "For how," he says, "can they who are feign to seek permission to enter into the herd of swine, have any real power over man, made in the image of God. Great, my brethren, are our means of defence against the hosts of Satan: an honest and pure life, and unfeigned faith towards God. Believe me,

Satan fears the prayers and fasting, the meekness and self-denial, the humility and contempt of vainglory, the compassion and self-command, and above all the heart purified by the love of Christ, of those who are living godly lives. For the old serpent, the worst enemy of man, knows that he lies under the feet of the righteous according to the word of the Lord which saith, 'Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.'" S. Luke x. 19.

And He suffered them. Christ granted the request of the devils: 1. To show that He had power over the evil spirits, and that they without His leave could do no evil to swine, much less to men. Hence, as we have seen, S. Antony says that they are not to be feared. 2. To demonstrate the number, strength and malevolence of the devils, and to make manifest by their expulsion the greatness of His power and glory. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius. 3. To refute the error of the Sadducees, who say that there is "neither angel nor spirit," Acts xxiii. 8. Hilary. Rupert adds, That the Gadarenes were Jews, who kept swine contrary to the laws, and that the destruction of the herd was a punishment for their disobedience; but this interpretation I have shown to be wrong.

Mystically. Christ did this to show men, who, after the manner of swine wallow in fleshly lusts and pleasures, that they in like manner are rushing into the abyss of hell, and also to teach us that we must account the loss of our earthly possessions as of small account compared with the destruction of the soul. For He permitted the devils to enter into the herd of swine in order to free the demoniac from their power; and to show how impure were the minds of the Gadarenes, and therefore how fitted they were to be possessed by devils; and yet further to intimate that those who live after the manner of swine fall an easy prey to the power of Satan.

Ver. 33.—*The herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake* (the lake of Genesareth or sea of Galilee) *and were choked.* S. Jerome writes that the place where this happened was well known in his day. The Syriac gives this rendering, "The whole herd hurried up the mountain, and thence rushed into the sea."

Ver. 34.—*When they that fed them saw what was done they fled* (lest they also should perish. Titus), *and went and told it in the city and in the country.* To the owners, in order that they might demand redress from Christ, who had given the swine up to the power of the devils, and not blame those who were in charge of the herd for their loss.

Ver. 35.—*Then they* (the inhabitants of the city and country round about) *went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus.* They first wished to ascertain the extent of their loss. Then they "came to Jesus," to see the author of the mischief which had befallen them, and the man from whom the devils had been cast out. For their loss was so great that they were anxious to see whether there was any possibility of redress.

And found the man out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. It is very probable that the man, as soon as the devils were cast out, fell on his knees at the feet of Christ to give Him thanks, and that when bidden to sit down, in reverent humility he placed himself at Jesus' feet.

And they were afraid Lest Christ should punish them because of their anger and murmurings against Him, and perhaps give them up to the power of the devils.

Ver. 37.—*Then the whole multitude* (the whole city, S. Matt.) *of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought Him to depart from them.* They did not make their request out of humility, because they considered themselves unworthy of the presence of Christ, as S. Jerome thinks, but out of distrust and fear, lest His continuing amongst them might cause them further loss. For they knew that Jesus was a Jew by nation, a holy man, and possessed of divine power, and that they were Gentiles of an alien race. They therefore feared lest He might inflict further punishment upon them because of their different religion and their past sins. They feared as did the widow of Sarepta, when she exclaimed, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" 1 Kings xvii. 18.

Therefore not from any ill-will, but rather from a reverential awe, they besought Jesus to depart out of their coasts. For sinners, knowing that righteousness and sin cannot exist together, fear the presence of holy men, because of the zeal with which they seek the correction of sinners and the punishment of sin.

And He went up into the ship, and returned back again, from the country of the Gadarenes to Capernaum. S. Matt. ix. 1. For He would not force Himself or His ministration on those who were unwilling to receive them.

Ver. 38.—*Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that He might be with Him.* In gratitude for the mercy he had received, and in hope of further benefits.

But Jesus sent him away, saying,

Ver. 39.—*Return to thy own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee*, by means of Me, that therefore acknowledging Me to be the Messiah, and laying aside their bitter feeling because of the loss of their swine, they may believe and be saved.

And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city (in Decapolis, S. Mark. v. 20) *how great things Jesus had done unto him.* This city was in the neighbourhood of Gadara, and near it were the tombs in which the demoniac used to dwell. It is very probable that, besides Jews, some of its inhabitants were Gentiles and unbelievers; to them, therefore, he would tell of his belief in Christ, in order to lead them to acknowledge the Son of God. S. Ambrose and S. Chrysostom.

Mystically. S. Gregory explains (*Moral.* lib. vi. cap. xvii.), that "Christ here would teach us to prefer the contemplative to the active life." For when our thoughts are once awakened to divine truths, we are unwilling to be taken up again with earthly concerns, and refuse to be burdened with our neighbours' wants and necessities. We seek the quiet of contemplation, and long for nothing but that which without labour refreshes the mind. But truth bids us return home, and show what great things have been done unto us in order that the mind may be first exercised in working, and then refreshed by contemplation.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *Christ sendeth his apostles to work miracles, and to preach.* 7 *Herod desired to see Christ.* 17 *Christ feedeth five thousand.* 18 *Enquireth what opinion the world had of him: foretelleth his passion.* 23 *Proposeth to all the pattern of his patience.* 28 *The transfiguration.* 37 *He healeth the lunatick.* 43 *Again forewarneth his disciples of his passion.* 46 *Commendeth humility.* 51 *Biddeth them to shew mildness towards all, without desire of revenge.* 57 *Divers would follow him, but upon conditions.*

THEN he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

10 And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some *say*, Elias; and others *say*, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing;

22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

23 And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will came after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels.

27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

28 And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* glistering.

30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

37 And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

41 And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him.* And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

46 Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him.

48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against us is for us.

51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples James and John saw *this,* they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them.* And they went to another village.

57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Ver 8.—*One of the old prophets was risen again.* As Enoch and Elias will rise again before the end of all things, to resist Antichrist. In like manner as Peter, Bishop and Martyr, the son of Urijah the prophet (Jer. xxvi. 20), was recalled to life by S. James the Apostle, and ordained first Bishop of Braga, six hundred years after his decease. S. Athanasius and others, cited by Bivarius.

Ver. 14.—*Make them sit down by fifties in a company*, κλισίας, *i.e.* in companies, in ranks or rows. Syriac.

Ver. 26.—*For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels*, *i.e.* at the day of judgment, when He shall sit as judge in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and in the presence of all, both men and angels, reward the just, and punish the evildoers.

Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me. Whosoever, from false shame or from fear of others, shall deny his faith in Me or refuse to obey My commandments, or fear the reproach of the Cross and a crucified Saviour, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, *i.e.* him will Christ pass over, and make of no account when He comes in that glory which He has acquired by the humiliation of His passion. For the Cross of Christ seemed to many a shame and a reproach, for Christ crucified was "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness," 1 Cor. i. 23. Many, therefore, from shame or fear, did not dare to profess their belief in the Cross, much less to preach Christ crucified. In opposition to whom S. Paul boldly declares, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," Rom. i. 16.

So the monk Martyrius took Christ, who appeared to Him as a wearied leper, upon his shoulders, and carried Him to the monastery, but felt not the weight of his burden, for the burden he was carrying supported him. There Christ assumed His own proper form, and ascending to heaven said, "As thou, Martyrius, wast not ashamed of Me on earth, I will not be ashamed of thee in heaven."

S. Gregory (*hom.* 39), also, explaining this passage of S. Luke,

writes, "Each one should ask himself, in order to test the reality of his confession of Christ, not whether he is ashamed of the name of the Redeemer, but rather whether by strength of purpose he has subdued all false feelings of earthly shame. In time of persecution believers might have had cause for shame at the treatment to which they were subjected; but now that persecutions are past, there is another aspect of the matter to which we should give heed. We shrink often from being lightly esteemed, and from being evilly spoken of by our fellow men, and in case of a dispute with our neighbour, we are ashamed to be the first to make amends. Because the carnal heart, seeking this world's glory, refuses the grace of humility;" and further on he gives the remedy for this false shame. "Let human pride be confounded, and let every man be ashamed, if he be not the first to seek to make amends to his neighbour; since, after we have done amiss, God by His ministers beseeches us to be reconciled to Him, whom we have offended."

Ver. 29.—*Glistering*, ἐξαστράπτων, *i.e.* like lightning glittering and emitting flashes of light, for the raiment of Christ shone from the glory of His altered countenance.

Ver. 31. *And spake of his decease*, ἔξοδον, departure, *i.e.* death.

1. They spake of His death, that He should die upon the Cross.

2. But the words may signify the victory which Christ was to win over death and sin and Satan. Allusion is made to the deliverance, the exodus of Israel from Egypt, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, which is a type of the deliverance effected by Christ for His people. Cyril thinks that by exodus we must understand "His passion" and the Arabic version interprets the word by "eventum," "outcome:" "They spake of the outcome and the events connected with the sufferings and triumph which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."

3. Some take the word to mean the excess of love and all virtues. For on the Cross was exhibited the excess and perfection of love, obedience, humility, patience, and every Christian virtue, inasmuch as Christ by the offering of Himself far exceeded the utmost limits of human virtue. This "excessus" then was an ecstasy of love,

wherein Christ went as it were out of Himself to show the immensity of His love for God and men.

Ver. 32.—*But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep.* S. Chrysostom takes sleep to mean amazement. But we may rather accept the words simply as describing the natural sleep which had fallen on the Apostles after the fatigue of their journey and watchings, from which they were awakened by the brightness of the transfiguration. See S. Matt. xvii. 1.

Ver. 49.—*And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbad him, because he followed not with us, i.e.* because he was not Thy disciple. For he thought that only the Apostles, to whom that power was given, were permitted to do this. Cyril and S. Ambrose remark, "He thinks that he who does not render obedience, should not enjoy the benefit arising therefrom." S. John asks the question, because from his love he was the more zealous for his Master's honour.

Ver. 50.—*And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.* They were taught that no one was to be hindered from the exercise of such powers of doing good as he possessed, but rather to be encouraged to seek to increase them. Gloss. God rewards the strong, but does not reject the weak. S. Ambrose. For, saith Theophylact, the grace of God operates even by means of the unworthy who are not disciples of Christ: like as men are made holy by priests who are not holy themselves. Hence Bede remarks, In the case of heretics, it is not their sacraments, which they hold in common with us, but their divisions, so contrary to the truth and peace, which we ought to detest and strive to amend. See S. Mark ix. 37.

Ver. 51.—*And it came to pass when the time was come* (*i.e.* was drawing nigh) *that He should be received up.* The time when, after having fulfilled His earthly ministry, He was to return again to the Father. The day foreordained of God when He was to be taken up into heaven. Euthymius. Up to this time Christ had, for two years and a half, been preaching the Gospel everywhere, but chiefly in the towns and villages of Galilee.

There yet remained to Him six months of life. He therefore now set forth to preach more particularly to the inhabitants of the holy city and Judæa, in order to prepare for His passion in Jerusalem and resurrection from the dead. S. Luke therefore implies that hitherto he had written of those things which Christ had done in Galilee, but was henceforward about to tell of what was done in Judæa.

He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. With a firm and undismayed mind. Bede. Christ turned not aside, as timid and hesitating people are wont to do, but went direct to Jerusalem, eager for the dread encounter. Titus, Theophylact, and others. For," says Jerome, "He who of His own will was hastening to His passion, needed both fortitude and firmness."

Thus it behoves us also to nerve our hearts, after the example of the martyrs, to endure hardship, like the lions described by Pliny, who tells us that, "when a lioness fights for her young, she keeps her eyes fixed on the ground, that she may not be terrified by the sight of the hunters."

S. Mark adds, x. 32, "and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed;" because they saw Him cheerfully and with a good courage going up to suffer and to die, and "as they followed, they were afraid" lest they might be called upon to die with Him.

It seems clear, as I have said in my chronological table, that this journey of Christ from Galilee to Judæa, is the same as that mentioned by S. Matt. xix. 1; by S. Mark x. 32; and S. John vii. 2 and 14.

From the latter Evangelist it is apparent that the journey was undertaken at the time of the feast of tabernacles, which falls in the September of our year, and since Christ suffered in the following March, it follows that the events here recorded happened about six months before the crucifixion. It is also evident, from what is recorded by S. Luke in the subsequent chapters, that during this period Christ often went to Jerusalem, and returned thence through Judæa, preaching and working miracles, as He had before done in Galilee; but we must bear in mind that S. Luke at times interrupts

his narrative to recapitulate certain things which had happened before our Lord had come to Judæa. Jansenius, Francis Lucas, and others.

On the other hand, Maldonatus places this journey a year before the death of our Lord, and is of opinion that Christ returned again to Galilee, and only went up to Jerusalem to suffer and to die. But this explanation does not agree with the words of the fifty-first verse, "when the time was come that He should be received up"—words which would not have been written if the time had been a year distant.

Ver. 52.—*And sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him*, to prepare food and lodging for Him and His companions, the twelve Apostles and the holy women who had followed Him out of Galilee. See chap. viii. 2, xxiii. 49.

Christ sent them in order that they might become accustomed to act independently of Him, and to be despised of men. Theophylact, Euthymius, and Maldonatus are of opinion that these messengers were James and John. Maldonatus also thinks that by the Greek κώμην, we are to understand city, possibly Samaria itself; but other commentators agree that the disciples were sent to some small town or village of the Samaritans which lay on the road to Jerusalem.

Ver. 53.—*And they* (the Samaritans) *did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.* Because He appeared to be going up to Jerusalem (Syriac), for it was plain, from the bearing of Jesus and His messengers, that they were on their way to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, S. John vii. 2. The Samaritans, contrary to the Law, had erected a temple on Mount Gerizim for the worship of God, and therefore there was on this account a constant enmity between the Jews and them. S. John iv. 20, and Josephus. Hence they rejected Jesus, as despising their form of worship and favouring that of their enemies, the Jews.

"His face was as though," a Hebraism for פכים, *i.e.* πρόσωπον, or face, is often used for the person himself.

Ver. 54.—*And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?* They show themselves to be indeed Boanerges, or sons of thunder, for with excess of zeal they would destroy these Samaritans, because of their inhospitality and refusal to receive Christ. They remembered how Elijah had destroyed those who had been sent by Ahaziah to apprehend him (2 Kings i. 10), and they knew that Jesus was mightier than that prophet; and if fire was sent from heaven to protect Elijah from harm, and to consume the Jews, who had come to take him, how much more deserving of punishment were these Samaritans, who had refused to receive the Son of God.

Wilt Thou that we command? For as S. Jerome goes on to say (*Epist.* 151), "The command of the Apostles can effect nothing, unless by the permission and will of God." They therefore seek from Christ, as from a judge, justice, and the punishment of the wicked, according to their deserts.

Ver. 55.—*But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* By spirit we must understand "disposition of mind," whether for virtue or vice. Ye know not what spirit worketh in you. Ye think ye are led by the spirit of God, when ye are prompted by impatience and the spirit of vengeance. Ye know not to what spirit ye are called. Ye know not that ye should be meek and lowly, as I your Lord and Master am. Ye would imitate the zeal of Elijah, and demand "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," Exod. xxi. 24. But this is not my spirit, nor is it the teaching of the new and Gospel Law, for I say unto you "Love your enemies, and do good unto those that hate you." S. Matt. v. 44. Have ye not heard and learned this from Me, or are ye so soon forgetful of my doctrine and teaching? He who had come, not for judgment but to show mercy, not in power but in humility, not in the glory of His Father but in lowly fashion as a man, rebuked them because they were forgetful both of His teaching and of the merciful precepts of His Gospel. S. Jerome.

Ver. 56.—*For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but*

to save them. Act, therefore, saith Bede, according to the spirit ye are of. Following the example of Christ, bear patiently as becometh saints. Titus.

And they went to another village, where they might meet with a better reception. By this He teaches His Apostles that hereafter, when they went throughout the world to preach the Gospel, if they were cast out of one city, they were patiently to go on to another. Hence He allowed Himself to be rejected by the Samaritans, that by His rebuke of James and John, He might teach the Apostles a life-long lesson. For, as saith S. Ambrose, mercy promoteth in thee patience, in the offender correction. Thus we find that these Samaritans who were spared punishment the sooner became believers. S. John iv.; Acts viii.

Perfect virtue desireth not vengeance, nor can anger exist where love aboundeth. The infirmities of our fellow men are to be borne with and remedied, not to be rejected as incapable of cure. Titus.

Ver. 61.—*And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.* This verse has been variously explained.

1. Suffer me to give notice to my parents and to consult with them; for he was doubtful what he should do. But Christ would not grant his request, because parents very often do not approve of the higher life, and sometimes dissuade their children from adopting it. Titus.

2. Suffer me to tell my parents of my intention, that knowing what is become of me, they may neither be anxious about me, nor come to seek me. S. Augustin (serm. vii. *De verbis Domini*) and Toletus.

3. S. Basil (*Constit. cap.* xxi.) thinks that the man, like the one who preceded him, was a disciple, and that he only sought permission to say farewell to his friends, as about to return to them no more. The Syriac favours this interpretation, and translates, "Let me go to salute, *i.e.* to bid farewell to my family at home, and I will ome again."

4. The best rendering is that of the Vulgate, which for "them" substitutes "those things." Let me go bid "those things" farewell. Give me time to dispose of my property at home, and divide it amongst my brethren and kinsmen; for this is the true meaning of the Greek word ἀποτάξασθαι. Hence the Arabic has, "Suffer me to make division amongst my friends at home." So also S. Augustin, Maldonatus, and others.

Ver. 62.—*And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*, or, to carry on the metaphor, is fit to work in the vineyard of God. For as the ploughman who seeks to make his furrows straight ought to look forward and never back, so he who has determined to consecrate himself to God's service, is unworthy to be Christ's disciple and to be an heir of the heavenly kingdom, if he still has regard for the perishable possessions of this world which he has renounced and given up; and so Euthymius says, "He who follows Christ ought forthwith to give up all things, lest by averting his eyes from his leader and guide, he might again be entangled by the sight of those things which he has left." So also Titus, Jansenius, Toletus, and others.

Christ in this very remarkable verse points out the way of perfection, and endeavours to withdraw the man from his own anxiety for his friends and possessions, in order that he might give himself up wholly to God. Especially as there was danger lest, delayed in the disposal of his property, or impressed with the value of his possessions, he might change his purpose, and like many others, lose the hope of his calling. And again, there was no need of his presence, for his brethren and kinsfolk could divide his property without him.

Thus James and John, when they were called, left their father and their nets, and straightway followed Christ, S. Matt. iv. 20. But on the other hand Elisha (1 Kings xix. 20) was permitted to bid farewell to his father and mother, apparently because there was in his case little danger of his being forgetful of his call. Hence S. Basil saith (*serm.* 1 *De Baptism*): He looks back who delays, however briefly,

that obedience which is to be rendered at once and promptly to the call of God.

Hence of the cherubim we read (Ezek. i. 12), "They went every one straight forward: they turned not when they went." Whereon S. Gregory says the winged creatures, *i.e.* holy preachers, turn not as they go, because they are passing through earthly things to heavenly; and therefore no more return to these things which they have left behind. For to seek in heart and mind after better things is, as it were, to advance or go along a certain road. Hence S. Paul, Phil. iii. 13, 14: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And to the bride it is said, "Forget thine own people and thy father's house," Ps. xlv. 10.

Hence also S. Augustin (*serm.* 7 *De verbis Domini*) says, "The east calleth thee, and thou turnest to the west."

Figuratively, says Bede, he putteth his hand to the plough, who by the Cross of Christ, as if by an instrument of remorse, wears away the hardness of his heart, and opens it to bear the fruit of good works. But he must not look back like Lot's wife to the things which he has left, and if the follower of the Lord, who wishes to bid farewell to them which are at home, is worthy of reproach, what will become of them, who for no sufficient reason visit the houses of those whom they have left in the world? For the frequent looking back on the things which we have forsaken, by force of habit draws us again to our past way of life. For practice, by which habits are formed, is very powerful; and habits become a second nature, which it is difficult to do away with or change. For it rapidly returns to itself.

See also the copious explanation of Suarez, "*De voto, lib.* 1. *cap.* ii.

CHAPTER X.

1 *Christ sendeth out at once seventy disciples to work miracles, and to preach.* 17 *Admonisheth them to be humble, and wherein to rejoice.* 21 *Thanketh his Father for his grace.* 23 *Magnifieth the happy estate of his church.* 25 *Teacheth the lawyer how to attain eternal life, and to take every one for his neighbour that needeth his mercy.* 41 *Reprehendeth Martha, and commendeth Mary her sister.*

AFTER these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house.

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell.

16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

23 And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them;* and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*,

34 And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Ver. 1.—*After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also.* Seventy-two. Vulgate. Dorotheus and others profess to give their names, but Eusebius declares that he knew of no written list of these seventy disciples, although the names of some might be gathered from the Acts of the Apostles, *e.g.*, Matthias and Barsabas, Acts i.; Stephen and the other Deacons, Acts vi.; Ananias and Barnabas, Acts ix.; Mnason, Acts xxi., and others. Here observe,

1. That as Moses at the beginning of his leadership chose elders or princes for the twelve tribes of Israel, and afterwards, by reason of the increase of the people and of the cares of government, made a further choice of six from each tribe, *i.e.* of seventy-two, to act as rulers: so Christ ordained that each tribe should have its Apostle, and six presbyters or elders, for such were these disciples, who were commanded to go throughout all Judæa, preaching that the kingdom of God and of Christ was nigh, and confirming their preaching by miracles, that so the work of the Apostles might be furthered and spread.

2. This number was mystically prefigured by the seventy-two translators of the Septuagint; by the "men of the elders of the people" whom Moses chose (Numbers xi. 16); by the number of the Sanhedrim, and by the wells and palm trees of Elim, Exod. xv. 27.

Again, the seventy-two disciples, saith Bede, answer to the seventy-two nations of the world, as if Christ had appointed to each nation its own disciple or teacher. For S. Augustine, S. Jerome, and others hold that after the confusion of tongues, mankind was divided into seventy-two nations and languages. See Gen. x. 32.

3. Hence, it is clear that there was distinction and difference in the degrees and duties of the priests. For these disciples were not equal in dignity to the Apostles; indeed Matthias, who was,

according to Clement of Alexandria, one of their number, was chosen from them to the Apostolate, Acts i. Hence the Fathers teach that the Bishops are the successors of the Apostles, and the priests of the seventy disciples. Although, in the early days of the Church, saith Bede, both the one and the other were called Presbyters or Bishops, in the one case to signify the ripeness of their wisdom, in the other case their zeal in the pastoral office.

Symbolically. As in twenty-four hours the whole world moves round the sun and receives light, so is the world enlightened by Christ through the Gospel of the Trinity, which was preached at His command by the seventy-two disciples. For three times twenty-four makes seventy-two. S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.*)

And sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come, i.e. into Judæa, as He had before sent the twelve Apostles into Galilee. Jesus wished to make Himself known to the Jews as the Messiah, and to offer them salvation through faith in Him. Therefore as He was Himself unable to go throughout their towns and cities, because the time of His departure was now nigh at hand, He chose the seventy to go before Him and heal the sick, that the minds of His countrymen might be prepared to acknowledge Him as the Christ, and to receive at His hands pardon and forgiveness. But He kept the twelve Apostles with Him to witness to His life, and that they might also assist Him in ministering to the necessities of those who waited on His teaching, and learn how in their turn they should labour for the conversion of the world.

Two by two. For these reasons:

1. That the one might aid and support the other, as Origen, Theophylact and S. Gregory say, and that if one were weary or from any cause unable to carry on the work, the other might take his place. "Two are better than one. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth.' Eccles. iv. 9, 10.

Wherefore Pachonius rules: If the Superior permit, let him take a trustworthy companion and then go forth to visit a brother or a

neighbour. And again, Let no one be sent on any business unless another go with him. S. Augustine writes, When ye are journeying, walk together—when at your journey's end, together rest. And so rule all the other founders of the religious orders.

2. That one may always have in the other a witness to his life, and an adviser and guide. Experience teaches us that they who are associated together two by two, rarely or never are tempted to sins of impurity, but that those who are alone lay themselves open to accusations of evil, even if they have not actually fallen away. Hence S. Thomas was wont to say, A monk away from his brethren is an active evil. S. Augustine rules (*Reg. cap.* xii.), When ye are in a church, or wheresoever there are women, let each protect the other's modesty. For thus God, who dwelleth in you, will protect you from yourselves. Another writer, S. Jerome, enjoins: If in the exercise of the priestly office, thou art called upon to visit a widow or a virgin, enter not the house alone; and again, Abide not alone with any woman, unless in the presence of a witness. So also S. Basil. Possidonius also tells us that if S. Augustine was asked by any women to visit them, he never entered their house or conversed with them, even on private matters, unless in the presence of some of his clergy. And so S. Charles Borromeo in our times adopted the rule of S. Augustine, for he never conversed with any of his female relations except one of his upper servants was present. (*Vita. Lib.* vii. *cap.* vi). And Seneca even (*Epist.* 25), says, "Solitude tempts us to every evil;" and as a corrective adds, "Without doubt, it is profitable to place a guard over thyself, so as to have some one to look to, some one to be acquainted with the very thoughts;" and adds, from Epicurus, "Do everything as if there was some one beholding thy actions;" and again (*Epist.* ii.), "Most sins would be avoided, if a man had a witness beside him when he was about to sin." The Emperor Justinian also (*De Monachis*), decrees that monks should go about in company, "to bear witness to each other's integrity." And Pope Lucian (*Epist.* i. *ad Episc.*) decrees, "We exhort you, for reputation's sake, that according to the rule of our holy Church ye always take with you priests and deacons

as witnesses of your life and conversation; for although ye may have a conscience void of offence, yet because of evilly disposed men, it behoveth you, as the Apostle saith, to have a good report amongst them that are without. 1 Tim. iii. 7. Hence we have ordained that, as a testimony to the Church, two priests or three deacons should always and in all places accompany their Bishop."

Lastly, we have the authority of S. Thomas of Canterbury, a man of great sanctity and wisdom, who says, "I who have been for thirty years a Bishop know how true is the saying, 'Woe to him that is alone.' For I have frequently heard of fearful dangers, and fearful scandals having befallen those who either in public or private affect a solitary life, evils into which they would not have fallen had they not shunned the companionship of their fellow men."

3. That their preaching might be more powerful to persuade. At the mouth of two or of three witnesses shall the matter be established, Deut. xix. 15. So we find Christ and His apostles constantly acting on this rule. For Christ sent two of His disciples, Peter and John, to loose the ass and to prepare the passover. After the resurrection Cleophas and a companion went to Emmaus. In like manner we find Peter and John often associated together: they run both to the sepulchre, they go up together to pray at the ninth hour, and both are sent to Samaria by the apostles.

So Paul and Barnabas were separated for the work of the Holy Spirit; Silas and Judas, surnamed Barsabas, sent to Antioch; and Paul and Silas to Syria; and according to the universal belief of the Church, Enoch and Elias will re-appear in the time of Antichrist as witnesses to the truth.

Figuratively. S. Gregory (*hom.* 17. *in Evang.*) says, The Lord sent His disciples two by two to preach, because the precepts of charity are two, the love of God and the love of our neighbour, and charity cannot exist without at least two, and thereby he silently suggests to us that he who has not love to another ought not to undertake the office of preaching.

So Origen. It seems from the word of God to be an ancient custom, that two should be associated in His service. For God led

Israel out of Egypt by the hands of Moses and Aaron. Joshua and Caleb also united together to appease the people. Hence a brother aided by a brother is as a fortified city. So two by two the animals entered into the ark, unclean by natural generation, but cleansed by the sacrament of the Church, by the spiritual grace attendant on the preaching of the disciples. Gloss.

Into every city and place, whither He Himself would come. Mystically signifying, as S. Gregory says, that the Lord Himself attends on His preachers. For the words of the preacher persuade men of the truth, and make their hearts ready to be the abiding place of Christ. Hence Isaiah, chap. xl. 3, says, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight a highway for our God." And the Psalmist, "Make a way for Him who ascendeth upon the west, the Lord is His name." Ps. lxvii. 5, Douay version.

Ver. 2—*The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few.* See S. Matt. ix. 37.

Ver. 3.—*Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.* That by your innocent and holy lives, through the power of My grace working in you, you may change the wolf into the lamb, *i.e.*, convert evil men from the error of their way. Fear not, therefore, for under My protection no harm can befall you. For, as S. Ambrose says, "the good Shepherd takes care that the wolves do His flock no harm."

Ver. 4.—*Carry neither purse* (provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purse, S. Matt. x.) *nor scrip.* Neither purse for money, nor scrip for food; for the Shepherd will supply both if needful. He commands them to look to Him who sent them forth for the necessaries of life. Euthymius.

For the preacher ought to have such trust in God, that although unprovided with the expenses of their present life, he should be convinced that they will not fail him; lest whilst his mind is taken up with things temporal, he should be less mindful of things eternal. S. Gregory. See S. Matt. x. For Christ here gives to the seventy disciples the same commands which He before gave to His twelve apostles.

And salute no man by the way. Do not turn aside to salute your friends or to commune with your acquaintances, but avoid all such delays, and devote yourselves entirely to the preaching of My gospel. SS. Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory and others

But on the other hand, Euthymius says, Christ means not that His disciples should uncourteously refuse a passing salutation. He only forbids those formal greetings,* which are hindrances to the ministry, and causes of offence. So writes S. Ambrose, who here alludes to the command of Elijah, "If thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again" (2 Kings iv. 29): a command given lest Gehazi might enter into converse with some one by the way, and thus be forgetful of the duty he was sent to perform.

Ver. 7.—*For the labourer is worthy of his hire.* By hire we must understand not money or its equivalent, but food and nourishment. For the preaching of the kingdom of heaven is above price. Hence S. Augustine says on Ps. ciii.: What do they receive? They bestow spiritual gifts, they receive carnal; they give gold, they receive that which is worthless. Therefore it is clear that the apostles should live by the gospel, and that their hearers were bound by every law, natural and divine, to support them. They were forbidden then to carry either purse or scrip, because God put it into the hearts of those that attended on their teaching to provide for all their wants. For S. Gregory says (*Hom.* 17), He who forbids us to carry scrip or purse, ordains that we should live of the gospel. Because it is fitting that we should receive earthly things from those to whom we offer heavenly rewards. And again, Christ shows why He bade His disciples carry neither scrip nor purse, not because these things are unneeded, but in order to teach that it was the duty of those to whom they were sent to supply them. S. Augustine, *De Consent. Evang. lib.* ii.

Ver. 16.—*He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me.* For you are my apostles, and ambassadors. And he

* "Eastern salutations are matters of no small importance, but carried out with great ceremony, and therefore productive of much delay and waste of time."

who despises an envoy despises the monarch who sent him. Therefore we ought to regard the commands of our religious superiors as if they issued from the mouth of Christ Himself. Hence S. Bernard (*de Præcepto*), Whatever God, or man speaking in the place of God, enjoins, that—unless contrary to the known will of the Almighty—must be looked upon as a divine command. And again, We must render to those whom God has put over us, in all things lawful, the same obedience as we would render to God. See further S. Matt. x. and xi.

Ver. 17.—*And the seventy returned with joy* (great joy, Syriac), *saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name.* They as much as say, We have not only healed the sick according to Thy word, ver. 9; but have even cast out devils through the power of Thy name. See, says Theophylact, their humility, for they say through Thy name, not by our own power or virtue. Yet a certain amount of vain glorying seems to have crept in unawares, because Christ had chosen them in preference to others to work such wonders; but their offence was a venial one, such as the Master would soon absolve.

Ver. 18.—*And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* Like lightning.

1. Unexpectedly: because as the lightning bursts forth unexpectedly from a tranquil sky, so were the devils suddenly cast down from heaven.

2. Violently, by the power of Michael and his angels, Rev. xii. 7.

3. Swiftly, in a moment of time.

4. Openly, in the presence of all the inhabitants of heaven.

Christ took example from the lightning to show how great and swift was the fall of Satan. Euthymius. Many think that Christ here speaks literally of the fall of Satan from heaven, *i.e.* from the power of which he possessed over the world before the coming of the Saviour.

Ye tell me no new thing, O my disciples, for when I sent you forth I saw the devil deprived of power, falling as it were from heaven, and about to be yet more discomfited by your ministry.

Christ saith this as if to magnify the power which He had given to the disciples. See how mighty a foe is subject to you through My name. So Nazianzen, S. Basil, and well-nigh all the Fathers.

Hear Theophylact. Some understand by the word heaven the honour and glory which Satan possessed, for before the coming of Christ he was worshipped as a god.

Euthymius also: Before the incarnation Satan was had in honour, and exercised kingly power, but he fell, not from heaven, because he had already fallen from it, but from all his glory and power when Christ was made man. So also Vatablus: When I sent you forth to preach I saw, saith Christ, that the power of Satan would be broken. "For" says S. Cyril, "Satan then fell from the heights of power to the extreme of weakness." He was venerated by men before the coming of Christ. He is now trodden under by the feet of the faithful.

Hence it is written, "I give you power to tread upon serpents."

But this allusion to the fall of Satan is mystical and symbolical rather than literal. Literally Christ speaks of Satan's fall from heaven, *i.e.* of the time when he and his angels were cast into the abyss, because through pride he sought to make himself equal with God, or because, as others think, he endeavoured to hinder the purpose of God in the incarnation of Christ.

Because, therefore, he envied the Divinity of Christ, he was cast out of heaven. The Greek word πεσόντα is in the past tense, and should therefore be translated as in the Arabic, "fallen." The whole passage, therefore, may be rendered thus, "Wonder not, O My disciples, that through My name ye have cast out devils; for I long since cast out of heaven Lucifer and his angels, because of their pride and discontent. But beware lest ye give way to pride, because the devils are subject unto you, and lest ye also for this cause incur a like punishment." So S. Jerome, and all the Fathers.*

But very appropriately is Lucifer compared to lightning.

* Taken literally, the following is the better interpretation: "I foresaw that by your preaching the power of Satan would be quickly broken," or what amounts to the same thing, "Whilst ye were absent preaching and working miracles in obedience to My command, I saw the power of Satan growing weak, and Satan, as it were, cast down from heaven."

1. Because by the brilliancy of lightning is very aptly shown the pre-eminence and fiery nature of Lucifer.

2. And also his excessive power to do hurt. For as the lightning shatters the hardest rock, so Satan overpowers all opposition.

3. Because of the shortness of his reign. For as the flash is quickly gone, so the dominion of Satan lasts but for this life, which is but as a moment compared with eternity.

Hence, figuratively, lightning is an emblem of this world's glory. For as it flashes, and is quickly gone, "so passes away the glory of this world."

Furthermore, as the brilliant lightning loses itself in the earth, so Lucifer, a bright angel, became through pride a foul fiend, and thus pride makes the best of men to become devils, whilst humility makes angels of the worst. See Isa. xiv. 11. "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee."

4. Because of his outward appearance, "for he transforms himself into an angel of light," 2 Cor. xi. 14.

The full meaning of this verse is as follows:—I, saith Christ, as God saw the fall of Satan when he was cast out from heaven, and in like manner, I now, as the Son of man, see him cast out of the temples in which he was worshipped, because I teach, and in My name ye also teach, the nations to break up their idols and to worship God alone. Hence, as I cast him out of heaven, so now I deprive him of his power over men. "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning. How is the light which was in thee become darkness." See Isa. xiv. 12.

Moraliter. S. Bernard, in his sermon, on 1 Cor. iii. 12, says, "There is no security in heaven or in paradise, much less in the world. In heaven the angels fell in the very presence of God; in the garden of Eden, Adam; in the world, Judas, a disciple of Christ. I have said this, that no man lull himself into false security because 'a place is holy ground.' For it is not the place which sanctifies the men, but the men who sanctify the place."

Mystically. S. Jerome, Ps. cxxiv. 8, says, "Many earthly

things became heavenly, and many heavenly things earthly." The traitor Judas was offered heaven, but chose earth. The apostle Paul, when persecuting the Church, was the enemy of Christ; but converted, he became meet for the kingdom of heaven. Let him, whose conversation is in heaven, beware of false security; and let not him who yet loves the world, despair of salvation.

Ver. 19.—*Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions.* Power ἐξουσίαν, *i.e.* authority. We may take the words literally, for to Adam was given dominion over every living thing. Christ then gives His disciples power over the wild animals as well as over devils. "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." S. Mark xvi. 17. And so S. Paul shook off the viper which had fastened on his hand, and felt no harm. Acts xxviii. 5. Jansenius, Maldonatus, and others.

And over all the power of the enemy, δύναμιν rendered in the Vulgate "virtutem," whether wild animal, or poison, or Satan himself. For by all the power of the enemy we may understand everything hostile to men.

But mystically, the passage has reference to the devils, who are described as serpents and scorpions, and called the power of the enemy, *i.e.* the army of Satan. S. Athanasius, Theophylact and others.

Hence Euthymius takes these serpents and scorpions as influencing the senses, or, as Bede says, "representing every kind of unclean spirit." He adds, "There is this difference between serpents which wound with their fangs, and scorpions whose sting is in their tail, that the serpents signify men or spirits raging openly, scorpions signify them plotting in secret. Thus by the serpent which deceived Eve, we must understand the devil in the serpent's form. See Gen. chap. iii.

Ver. 20.—*Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you.* He does not forbid them altogether from rejoicing in that the spirits were subject unto them, for this was a lawful joy, but he exhorts them to rejoice rather at their election to eternal life.

1. Because power over the devils is a grace given to the Church,

and sometimes bestowed upon the unworthy, as Judas. S. Matt. vii. 22. But predestination brings men into favour with God, and ends in everlasting happiness.

2. Because, as Euthymius says, "The one joy is productive of pride and vainglory, but the other of good works, and a desire to please God.

3. Again, because the casting out of devils and the working of miracles is due to the power of God, and is independent of human merit. But they whose names are written in heaven, at some time present or future are made meet for so great a reward. Bede.

4. Lastly, because to cast out devils affects others, but it is for our own profit that our names are written in heaven. Theophylact.

Are written in heaven, "in the book of life," not by pen and ink, says Titus, but by the foreknowledge and election of God. Ye are citizens inscribed on the roll of an eternal city, not after the manner of men, but written down in the remembrances of God Euthymius. Not, says Bede, because God can forget, but that His purpose may stand fast for ever.

Hence, as the foreknowledge and election of God are twofold, so is the book of life. The one perfect and complete, in which are the names of those who are predestinated to eternal life. The other imperfect and incomplete, because they whose names are written in it may fall away, and forfeit their promised reward. So the Apostle salutes Clement and his fellow-labourers, "whose names are written in the book of life" (Phil iv.) meaning thereby that they, like the Ephesian converts, were called by God and predestinated by Christ to believe on Him, but that their final salvation was conditional on their perseverance and faith. Eph. i. And again, Eph. ii. 19, "Ye are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God:" by grace here and in the glory hereafter, if ye depart not from the grace which is given you. So the Church in the "Secreta" for Lent prays, that the names of all believers may be retained in the book of God's predestination. These then can forfeit their election, and therefore their salvation is conditional on their perseverance in well doing. For this is the interpretation of

Jansenius, Francis Lucas, and others, though Maldonatus doubts whether it be the right one, and Toletus refuses to accept it.

For it is clear from ver. 18 that Christ did not give the seventy disciples to understand that they were absolutely and unconditionally predestinated to glory, for He would have them mindful of condemnation. As Satan fell from heaven, so take heed lest ye also come short of the glory prepared for you in heaven. So all the apostles were called by Christ, and yet one of them was a reprobate. "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" S. John vi. 70. And also among the deacons, who were chosen from the seventy was Nicolas, a man of impure life and the author of the heresy of the Nicolaitanes. S. Jerome, *Epist.* 48.

Hence we must understand the promise of Christ (S. Matt. xix. 28), "Ye which have followed me, shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelves tribes of Israel," to be conditional, *i.e.* to be fulfilled only if they continued to follow Him to their life's end.

Ver. 21.—*In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit* (Spiritu Sancto, Vulgate), because the Holy Spirit had, according to His promise, granted the disciples, though weak and unlearned men, the power of working wonders, and had thus led others to believe in Christ and to glorify God.

And hast revealed them unto babes, i.e. that thou hast revealed to my humble and unlearned disciples the truth, so that they might acknowledge Thee, the one true God, and Me whom Thou hast sent, and might be predestinated to eternal life; and that many others also, whom they have healed of their diseases, and from whom they have cast out devils, might be brought to the knowledge of God, and believe to the salvation of their soul.

Ver. 22.—*All things are delivered to Me of My Father.* As all things were created by My Father, so all things are created anew by Me, and redeemed from the curse of sin. That thus I might raise up those who had fallen away, and might sanctify them, and might renew all the other creatures which had become corrupt through the sin of man.

"For," says S. Athanasius (*Serm.* iv. *contra Arianos*), "after the fall

of man, all things were made partakers of his transgression. And so death reigned over all from Adam even unto Christ. The earth was given over to the curse, hell was opened, paradise shut, heaven became an enemy, and mankind being corrupted and lost, the devil triumphed over us."

"Then He gave Him a human nature, that the Word Himself might take upon Him our flesh, and might renew in all the nature He had taken.

"All things were delivered unto Him as the physician who could heal the serpent's bite, as the life which could restore the dead, as the light which could illuminate the darkness, as the understanding which could renew the powers of the mind."

And in explanation, he adds, "After all things were delivered to Him, and he was made man, all things were renewed and made perfect again. The earth received a blessing instead of a curse, paradise was unlocked. Hell drew back from fear, the graves gave up their dead, and the gates were thrown open that He might enter from Eden."

Christ does not speak here of the essence and attributes which were communicated to Him from the Father by His divine generation, as S. Chrysostom, Hilary, and S. Ambrose explain, but of the plenary power which was given to Him as man, to effect the salvation of men.

Ver. 25.—*And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up.* "What ought I to do to obtain eternal life?" This lawyer is not the same as the one mentioned by S. Matt. xxii. 35, as is clear from the circumstances there recorded.

And tempted Him. He asked the question, not for any good motive, but with the design of tempting Christ to give some answer concerning Himself or His doctrine, which might lay Him open to the charge of being a breaker or a despiser of the law. Toletus.

Ver. 29.—*But he, willing to justify himself.* To justify himself, *i.e.* to show himself to be more just than others. "Show me any one who comes nigh me in righteousness, who is as just and upright as I am. Such an one you will scarcely find." So Titus, Euthymius,

and Isidore of Pelusium, who think that the lawyer spoke with the pride and arrogance of a Pharisee.

"He thought," says Isidore, "that the neighbour of a righteous man must be righteous, and the neighbour of an exalted man one of high degree. Show me some one so great as to be worthy to be compared with me."

But the answer of Christ proved the contrary, as is clear from a consideration of the passage. For when this lawyer heard Christ commend the answer he had given, his purpose changed, and his aversion turned into love and reverence for the Lord. Hence he earnestly asked, Who is my neighbour? that by loving him he might fulfil the law.

Hence, "willing to justify himself," means that he wished to show his love for that which was right, that he was anxious out of an awakened conscience to understand and learn the law of God, in order that he might fulfil its precepts. Toletus, Jansenius, and others.

And who is my neighbour? There was much questioning amongst the scribes concerning this, and much error. For because it is written, Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt love thy friend" (רע rea), they inferred the contrary, "thou shalt hate thy enemy," *i.e.* the Gentile, every one not a Jew: an error which Christ corrected, S. Matt. v. 43.

Hence the scribes thought that the Jew alone, as a worshipper of the one true God, and of the same religion and race, could be a friend, or a neighbour, and even of their countrymen only those who were faithful in their observance of the law, were to be loved or to be held in honour.

Well, therefore, might this lawyer ask, Who is my neighbour? I love all my countrymen who walk uprightly, and regard them as my neighbours, but are there others whom I ought to love? Christ answers that all men are our neighbours, because they partake of the same life, the same grace, the same salvation through Christ, the same sacraments, the same vocation and calling, and are journeying with us to the same eternity of happiness.

Every man, therefore, is our "rea," our friend and our fellow;

or in the Greek πλησίος, near to us, from πελαζω or πλάω, I draw nigh, which is more forcibly rendered in Latin by "proximus," because we are "proximi," next or nearest to each other in a direct sense by virtue of the life we live in common with them, and the blessings which we enjoy.

But by proximus Cicero and the Latins understood vicinissimus, *i.e.* neighbour in the strictest sense. Hence Isidore (*lib.* x. *etymol.*) We call him the nearest to us, who is next of kin; and Cicero (*lib.* II *De legibus*), "Whatever is best, that we must look upon as next or nigh unto God." But now all men are our neighbours by creation, and by their redemption and calling in Christ.

Figuratively. The word "neighbour" is suggestive of the tenderest affection and love, such as that of brother for brother, or of a son for his father, for no one comes between them, inasmuch as there is no nigher relationship; yet there are degrees of this love, for we must love our father more than our brother, and our brother more than any more distant relation, for amongst our nearest of kin one is nearer to us than another, and therefore more to be loved.

Ver. 30.—*And Jesus answering said.* Taking up or continuing His discourse. Euthymius. *I.e.* answering the lawyer, and explaining fully and clearly to whom "neighbour" applied.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves. A Jew, S. Augustine says; and an inhabitant of the holy city. Bede.

The parable is founded on incidents of at that time frequent occurrence, and is therefore a true history. For, as S. Jerome observes, between Jerusalem and Jericho was a place infested with robbers, called in the Hebrew tongue Adommim, or rather Addammim, *i.e.* red or bloody, because of the blood which was shed there. So Adrichomius describes Adommim as a place infamous even in later times for robberies and murders, terrible to behold, and so dangerous that no one dared to pass through it without an escort.

There the Samaritan met with this man who, like many another traveller, had been grievously wounded by robbers. The place

itself lay four leagues to the west of Jericho, and was situated on the confines of Judah and Benjamin. A fort had been built there, and garrisoned with soldiers, for the protection of travellers. Close by was a large cavern, and the country round was hilly, so that robbers could see from afar the approaching wayfarer, and lie in ambush to attack him. Hence in Joshua xv. 7 the place is called the going up to Adommim.

Which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Stripped him of his raiment, money, and all that he had, and left him half dead by the wayside, where he would have died of his wounds had no one come to succour him. For it is the custom of robbers, in order to avoid detection, to murder their victims. The Syriac version makes the meaning clear. "They wounded him, and left him when there was scarce any life remaining in him."

Ver. 31.—*And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.* By chance, humanly speaking, but really by the providence of God, for all things are foreordained by Him. Passed by on the other side, "ἀντιπαρῆλθεν." The priest, terrified at his appearance, turned away from him, and went by on the other side. Christ here draws attention to the perversity of the priests of that day, who were zealous in carrying out all the outward observances of the law, but were utterly wanting in true religion and in showing mercy and pity. For this priest left his fellow-countryman and neighbour in his direst distress without even a word of consolation or comfort.

Ver. 32.—*And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.* The Levite amongst the Jews, like the deacons in the Church, assisted the priest in his ministrations. He was therefore of one mind with the priest, for as the priest so is the Levite, as the prelate so the deacon, as the master so the servant, as the teacher so the disciple. And so he also passed by on the other side.

Ver. 33.—*But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.* A Samaritan

one of an entirely different race and religion, and therefore, as a heretic and schismatic, more hateful to the Jews than any other of the Gentiles. Yet this despised Samaritan had pity on the poor traveller who had been abandoned by both priest and Levite. Hence we learn that not only our friends but also our enemies are our neighbours, and Christ holds up this Samaritan as an example of brotherly kindness and love, because he had compassion on one who was hateful to himself and his people.

Ver. 34.—*And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.* Went to him, got off the horse or the ass on which he was riding, and poured into the wounds the oil and wine which he carried with him as refreshment for the way.

The order is inverted. He first, in accordance with the practice of the physicians of that day, washed the wounds with wine; for wine (1.) removes the coagulated blood; (2.) arrests corruption; (3.) closes the wound and strengthens the nerves against the effects of the bruises.

Then he anointed the wounds with oil—(1.) To sooth their smart; (2.) to allay the pain; and (3.) to help forward the cure.

Hence S. Gregory says (*lib.* xx. *chap.* 8, *Moral.*), By wine we may understand the gnawings of conscience; by oil the healing influences of religion—and so mildness must be mingled with severity if we would heal the wounds of the soul, and rescue sinners from the power of sin. But S. Chrysostom considers the wine to be the blood of the Passion, the oil the unction wherewith we are anointed, *i.e.* the unction of the Holy Spirit. Interlinear Gloss.

And set him on his own beast. On his ass. Syriac.

Allegorically. S. Augustin explains the beast to mean the flesh of Christ, and to be set thereon, to believe in the incarnation. S. Ambrose says, He places us on His beast whilst He bears our sins; and Theophylact, He made us to be His members and partakers of His body.

And brought him to an inn. εἰς πανδοχεῖον, in stabulum. Vulgate. The resting-place built for the accommodation of all—the stabulum, where travellers stopped or stood to rest.

And took care of him. Providing everything which his case required.

Ver. 35.—*And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence—i.e.* not two pence in the ordinary signification of the words, but sufficient to supply the wants of the wounded man until his return. S. Augustine says, "The two pence are the two precepts of love, which the apostles received for the evangelising of the world, or the promise of this life, and of that which is to come."

And gave them to the host, &c. Learn hence how great was the love of the Samaritan, for he provided everything that was needful for the poor traveller's cure.

Allegorically. The traveller is Adam wounded, and all but dead in trespasses and sins. For Adam went from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell from grace into the power of Satan. For the thieves are the evil spirits who tempted Adam and Eve to sin, and corrupted the souls of all with the lust of concupiscence. The priest and Levite represent the ancient law, which was unable to remedy the consequences of Adam's fall.

The Samaritan is Christ, by whom men are rescued from sin and promised salvation. The beast is his human nature, to which the divine is united, and on which it is carried and borne. The inn is the Church, which receives all believers. The wine is the blood of Christ, by which we are cleansed from sin. The oil represents his mercy and pity. The host, who is the head of the inn, *i.e.* of the Church, is S. Peter. So S. Ambrose, Origen, and the Fathers.

Hear also Origen more particularly: "A certain preacher thus interprets the parable. The man who went down from Jerusalem is Adam. Jerusalem is Paradise, Jericho the world. The thieves are the powers which are against us. The priest is the law, the Levite, the prophets. The Samaritan is Christ. The beast whereon he sat, the body of the Lord, *i.e.* His humanity. The inn the Church. By the two pieces of money we may understand the Father and the Son, and by the host, the head of the Church, him to whom its governance is committed. The return of the Samaritan

is the second coming of the Lord;" and this interpretation seems reasonable and true.

Again the Fathers and Theologians teach from this parable that Adam was stripped of those gifts and good things which were of grace, but wounded in those things which were of nature, not indeed in his nature pure and incorrupt, for nature is the same after sin as before, but in his nature stablished by grace, cleansed and renewed by justification imputed by God. For in a nature of this kind all the appetites and passions as well as the lust of concupiscence are subjected to the understanding, so that a man does not wish or desire anything but that which is right. For deprived through sin of original justification we experience in ourselves, unwittingly and contrary to our will, evil desires. This is the wound which nature has received.

Ver. 36.—*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?* The true meaning of the passage is this, Which of these three seems to thee to have acted as neighbour to the wounded man? and in this sense it was understood by the lawyer who answered, "He that showed mercy upon him." Christ asked the lawyer which of the three by his actions showed that he looked upon the wounded man as a neighbour. For neighbour is a correlative term, and a man can only be a neighbour to a neighbour, just as a man can only be compassionate to one who needs pity.

Hence Christ indicates the one by the other, and thus answers the lawyer's inquiry. Christ inverted His answer, in order to give an example of the perfection of brotherly love, so that the lawyer and all men might learn to imitate the Samaritan. Hence Jesus said, "Go and do thou likewise," v. 37.

So also in the parable of the two debtors, Christ asks, "Which of them will love him most?" See chap. vii. 42. S. Augustin, Bede, and all the Fathers.

Ver. 37.—*And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.* Hereby we understand, says S. Augustine, "that he is our neighbour to whomsoever we must

show compassion, if he need it, and would have shown it if he had needed it." Hence it follows that even he who must in turn show us this duty is our neighbour. For the name of neighbour relates to something else, nor can any one be a neighbour except to a neighbour.

Hence it is clear that to no one, not even to our enemy, is mercy to be denied. And S. Augustin very appositely adds, "What more remote than God from men? For God possesses two perfections, righteousness and immortality. But man two evils, sin and death. God was made man, and so like unto us, yet not like us, for He was without sin, and by bearing the punishment, but not the guilt of sin, He abolished both the guilt and the punishment."

Isidore of Pelusium assigns the cause. Relationship is reckoned according to nature, not virtue; in essence, not by worth; by compassion, not by place; by the manner of treatment, not by neighbourhood. For we must account him as a neighbour who is most in need of our aid, and be willing at once to render him help.

Ver. 38.—*Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house.* As they went preaching the Gospel, v. 1. "A certain village:" probably Bethany, where Martha dwelt.

The servant, says S. Augustine, by reason of His condescension, not His condition, received her Lord, the sick the Saviour, the creature the Creator, one to be fed in spirit, Him who must be fed in the flesh.

The hospitality of Martha is praised, for she received Jesus, who was hated by the chief priests and scribes, and in receiving Him she received God, who blessed her and her house, and after death received her into glory.

Thus Abraham entertained angels unawares. See Heb. xiii. 2.

Hence Christ appeared to Martha as she lay dying, and as a reward for her hospitality invited her to His heavenly kingdom, and it is added on the authority of S. Antonine, that the Lord Himself was present at her burial. Thus He honours those who honour Him.

Ver 39.—*And she had a sister called Mary*, surnamed Magdalene. They were sisters, says S. Augustin, not only by their parentage but in religion, for both were followers of Christ, and both served Him present in the flesh—blessed in such a guest.

Which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word. The word "also" shows that at the very time when Mary might have been assisting her sister in her household cares, she was sitting at Jesus feet showing her diligence and zeal in hearing, and the great reverence which she had for Christ.

As by sitting at Jesus' feet she had made the better choice, says S. Augustine, so she received the greater benefit. For water collects in the low-lying valleys, but flows down the acclivities of the hills.

And heard His word. Christ here teaches His disciples how they ought to behave in the houses of those who receive them, for, says S. Chrysostom (S. Cyril in the Catena), "They should not remain idle, but rather fill the minds of those who receive them with heavenly doctrine." That no time may be without fruit, but that they may everywhere sow the seeds of religion, and excite men to virtue and to the love of God. Thus did Peter Faber, the first companion of S. Ignatius Loyola, who spent his whole life in journeying amongst his fellowmen, and in his will left us this salutary advice, that when we enter a house we should recite the hours, or take part in religious discourses, to show the reality of our profession. For thus a stop is put to improper conversation, and religion is the gainer. Thus he more than once by his discourse moved those whom he was entertaining to repentance, and received from them confession of their sins. Thus also did S. Francis Xavier, who sailed throughout the East, and won converts as much by his life as by his preaching.

Ver. 40.—*But Martha was cumbered with much serving*, περιεσπᾶτο περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν, was drawn aside and distracted, *i.e.* was anxious that nothing should be wanting for the entertainment of such a guest. Hence the Arabic, Martha was diligently serving to the utmost of her power.

And came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister

hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. Came to Him: Greek, ἐπιστᾶσα, standing by Him.

Dost Thou not care? Does not it displease you? Arabic.

Martha spoke thus partly from her wish that all things should be properly prepared for Christ, partly from her knowledge of His consideration and kindness. Lord, my sister sees me overwhelmed with care because of my desire to honour Thee, and yet does nothing to assist me. Out of kindness to me, bid her, therefore, share my labour. She will obey Thy word, but will not, I know, listen to my request.

Ver. 41.—*And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.* The repetition of her name, says S. Augustin, "is a sign of affection, or perhaps of a desire to arrest her attention more particularly to what He was about to say. For she was so entirely engrossed by her household cares, that His words might have been unheeded had she not been specially addressed by name." S. Augustin adds, "Mary made no reply, because she preferred to commit her cause to her Judge, and knew that Christ would, as He was wont, stand by her and support her. Hence Christ, who was appealed to as Judge, became her Advocate." Interlinear Gloss.

Thou art too anxious, Martha, and therefore thou are troubled. Thou desirest to prepare many things for me, whereas I need but few. Emmanuel Sa and all the others translate τυρβάζῃ, thou art confused, but the better rendering is, thou art troubled. For those who are anxious about many things experience much perturbation of mind—hence too much care and anxiety is the sign of excessive love or fear, and so they who love honour or riches, or any other thing too much, fear lest they may lose what they love, and become perturbed and anxious.

Ver. 42.—*But one thing is needful.* The Greek has ἑνὸς δέ ἐστιν χρεία; and this "one thing" Christ places in opposition to the "many things" about which Martha was troubled.

What then is this one thing which is needful? Luther, Bullinger, Melancthon, and other like innovators answer, Faith, *i.e.* to hear

the Gospel and to believe in it. For this is what the Magdalene did. Hence they think that faith only is necessary for salvation. Only believe, they say, that you are saved through the merits of Christ, and you will assuredly obtain your salvation. But such a faith is rash and delusive. For blasphemers and evildoers might possess it. Hence, in addition to faith, hope, charity, and good works are necessary for salvation, as is clear from S. Matt. xix. 17, 1 Cor. xiii., and Holy Scripture generally, and from the example of the Magdalene herself, who not only heard, but was obedient to the word of the Lord. See S. Luke vii. 43.

The truer and more orthodox interpretation seems to be that of those who understand by "one thing" one kind of food. Thou art anxious, Martha, to place before me many dishes, but to no purpose, for I require but one. I want not a rich banquet, but only ordinary food, for I am temperate, and a lover of humble fare. I do not blame, but praise your desire to do Me honour, yet I warn you not to be over careful for the things of this life, nor to call your sister away from hearing My words. So Theophylact, S. Gregory, and others.

Hear also S. Basil: "There is need of few things, or rather of but one. Of few things as far as preparations are concerned, but of one object for the supply of our need;" and Titus, "We came not hither to fill ourselves with superfluous food, for nature is content with little." Similarly Theophylact says, "One thing is needful: we must eat something, but we need not varieties of food," *i.e.* according to the Arabic version, "That which is necessary for us we can easily obtain."

2. But in a higher sense, the one thing needful is the love of God, and the desire of salvation. This was the good part which Mary had chosen; and therefore, explaining the one thing needful, Christ goes on to say, "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

The meaning is, therefore, this: Thou, Martha, art troubled about many things, but I exhort thee to devote thyself to one thing alone, to seek to please God, and Him only, in every action of thy

life, and to do everything out of love towards Him. So, not attempting that which thou art unable to perform, thou wilt be enabled to serve God quietly and without fear, and to accomplish whatsoever He would have thee to do. Bede, Euthymius, and others.

Hence S. Augustine and S. Gregory say, "This one thing is the end and chief good of men, on which their minds should be ever fixed;" and Cassian says, "The one thing needful is a mind which, regardless of all else, is fixed on God alone, and rejoices in the contemplation of His perfections." For although divine contemplation is not necessary for salvation it is necessary for the perfection of those who are united to God by a holy life. So the Psalmist says, Ps. xxvii. 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." And S. Paul, Phil. iii. 13, 14, "One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And again, Esther xiv. 18, "Thine handmaid hath never rejoiced since I was brought hither, unto this day, but in thee, O Lord, the God of Abraham."—Douay. For Christ saith, S. John xvii. 3, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Wherefore, when S. Ægidius, a very holy man, one of the first followers of S. Francis, was asked the way to holiness and perfection, he answered, "Una uni." Let your whole mind be entirely given up to God, and one with Him. For unity is contrary to division, and God is one. Wherefore let him who seeks God return to unity with Him, for God must be sought by conformity of will, and by the union of the intellect and affections. S. Bernard (*serm.* 7 *in Cant.*)

Hence S. Augustine (*lib.* 11, 18 *De Ordine.*) proves by induction that all things tend to one, because, as he shows, "Unity or singleness is the first fruit of God, who is the first essential and uncreated unity, the origin and fount of all other unities;" and in a later chapter he dwells upon the beauty of unity.

In short, the one thing needful is God. All other things con-

tingent and immaterial, created by the good pleasure of God out of nothing; and as, to quote the proverb, he who pursues two hares catches neither, so he who strives to please God and the world fails to attain either object.

Figuratively, this "one thing" is to be acquired by meditation and prayer, for thus men are brought into communion with God. Hence he who would lead a religious life should seek this one thing only, so as to be thereby drawn into union with the Almighty. S. Dionysius and Climacus. "A monk is one who always has his soul lifted up to God; one who prays at all times, at all places, and on all occasions;" and S. Chrysostom says, "Prayer is the heart and soul of a perfect and religious life;" and S. Bonaventura (*De perfectione vitæ, chap.* 5), declares that "If any one who has taken the vows of a religious life omits frequent prayer, his soul is dead within him, or in other words he is like a body without a soul, having the outward form and religion, but lacking its inward grace." And again, "Without abundant prayer religion becomes languid and weak. Why, unhappy spirit, dost thou wander through many places, seeking rest and finding none? Set thy affections on Him, of whom are all things, and in Him thou wilt rest happy and content. For He will satisfy thee with good things, and give thee to drink out of His pleasures as out of a river."

Hear also what Epictetus says to Arrian: "All first principles must, as if the world were turned upside down, return to one—all beauty, truth, and everything which is good, to one origin—everything divine to one God, all unity to the Triune." For unity, the beginning of things, goodness, truth and God are the same, and therefore one. Hence we read, Cant. ii. 16, "My beloved to me, and I to Him," for the Bride makes entire surrender of herself to her spouse; and so the saints desire to put off the flesh, that their souls may be united with God. So S. Paul was willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8); and Simeon, "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word;" and the Psalmist, "Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech." Ps. cxx. 5.

S. Basil speaks of some who abhorred this life, as if it were a dark prison, and with difficulty restrained their desire (ὀξγαῖς) for release, because their hearts were filled with the love of God, and eager to gaze upon the divine perfections: they longed for the time when they might for ever contemplate the loving-kindness of the Lord.

So this blessed rest is to the wise a time of working, and the mind which has once been absorbed in the contemplation of the divinity, sustains itself on God and is sustained by Him.

Wherefore David says, Ps. xlii. 2, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?"

Symbolically, unity is the beginning and end of all numbers, for every number commences and ends in it—whilst it is independent and indivisible.

So God is the beginning and ending of all things, the Alpha and Omega (Rev. xxi. 6), who shutteth and openeth all things, before whom and after whom there is nothing. Who was from all eternity, through whom and by whom all things exist. Hence Plato says, "All things spring from the divine unity, and retain the trace of their origin, by means of which they are recalled to this unity, and perfected in it;" and considers unity to be God, in whom all things exist as branches from the root.

Again, where sin is there is division; but where virtue, there oneness—where love, there unity. Therefore let him who seeks after virtue love one thing, and seek also for unity. For Christ, the teacher of unity, wills to join us together in one Church and unite us to Himself.

For unity imparts holiness to the mind, health to the body, peace and concord to countries and households, in short, all the virtue and strength of a nation arises out of its oneness with itself. But division is the cause of discord, schism, war, and countless ills. Hence Plato (*De Repub. lib.* v.) says, The worst evil which can befall a state is division, and its highest good subjection, if subjection makes it again one.

Hence S. Augustine says of the heavenly life, "There will be

there no grudging because of unequal love, for one love will reign supreme in all;" and S. Gregory, "So great a love there unites all, that each rejoices that another rather than himself has received a blessing." Life therefore reigns in love, *i.e.* in union; but death in hatred, *i.e.* in division.

Mary hath chosen that good part. The Syriac and Arabic add "to herself"—hath taken to herself. The Greek word ἀγαθήν implies excellence, hence the Vulgate gives optimam. For Christ commends the one sister more than the other. "Thou, Martha, hast chosen well, but Mary better. Thou hast not chosen a bad part, but she a better." S. Augustine. "Behold, Martha is not blamed, but Mary is praised." Bede. And again, S. Augustin (*serm.* 27 *De Verbis Domini*), "Can we imagine that Martha was blamed for being intent on hospitable cares? How could she be rightly blamed for rejoicing over such a guest?" So also Ambrose and Cassian (*Collat.* i., *chap.* 8).

Theophylact explains, "By the action of the one, the body is nourished; by the action of the other the soul receives life." And Euthymius, "It is good to be hospitable, but it is better to hear the word of God, for the one is of the body, the other of the spirit."

S. Augustin gives another figurative interpretation: "Why was Mary's the better part? Because she preferred the one thing to many. Many things were created, but there was but one Creator, and if the things created were very good, how excellent must He be who created them."

There are three persons in the Godhead, and these three are one, so the nearer you approach to perfect unity, the nigher you draw to God; and Christ Himself prays the Father that His disciples "may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." And again, "The glory which thou gavest Me have I given them; that they may be one, even as We are one." See S. John xvii. 21 *et seq.*

Hence to choose the good part, is to give up all care of earthly things, and to devote oneself entirely to the service of God.

Hear Richard de S. Victor on Cant. viii: "Mary chose the better

part, because she saw that the contemplation and the love of God included all things; but her sister was occupied about things which, though many, are limited to this world: hence by comparison Martha was troubled about few things. But the one thing necessary, and to be preferred before all, is to love God with the whole heart, and to show love and charity to all men." And Suarez (*De Oratione Mentali*) says, "Mary made the better choice, because mental prayer brings about blessedness in this life, because it is the commencement of that beatific vision which will be the happiness of the saints in heaven."

Hence the joy of Magdalene was real and lasting. So S. Bernard says, "It is impossible to enjoy here on earth a sweet and happy life, since the earth itself is subject to constant change; but there is a joy lasting in its happiness, which arises out of a pure conscience. For the mind which is purified from earthly affections and entirely fixed on the contemplation of heavenly things, fears no threatenings, knows no fear, conceives no false hopes, but, void of all offence, rests in perfect peace." Hugo Victorinus accounts for this perfect peace thus: "A conscience is quiet and void of offence when it is kindly affectioned to all, and bears ill-will to none: when it regards a friend with kindness, an enemy with patience, and seeks to do good, if possible, to all men."

Allusion is here made, says Maldonatus, to the manner in which the ancients divided an inheritance. It was customary for the eldest son to divide the property into as many parts as might be requisite, and for his brothers to have the first choice, so as to ensure an equal division. Seneca (*lib.* vi., *Declamatio* 3).

Thus Christ was the inheritance, which Martha as the elder sister divided into two parts, to hear Christ and to serve Him. Mary the younger chose the better part, *i.e.* to hear the words of Christ, for the Hebrew (חלק), chelec, *i.e.* part, in Scripture signifies the lot of one's inheritance. Thus, "The Lord is my portion," Lam. iii. 4. See also Psalm xvi. 5.

But the active and the contemplative life combined tend to perfection, for the one controls and directs the other. So Christ taught

the people by day, but was wont to spend whole nights in prayer, and following his example thus did also the Baptist and the Apostles.

Which shall not be taken away from her. Because to hear, like Mary, the word of God, and to meditate thereon, is spiritual food which will support the soul until it comes to appear in the eternal presence; but to minister, as Martha, is to choose that part which endures but for this present life. S. Augustin and others. Hence S. Gregory: "The part which Mary chose will never be taken away from her, because a contemplative life is unlike an active life, its joys gain strength from death."

Hear also S. Augustin: "That which thou hast chosen, Martha, will be taken from thee, that something better may be given. For in place of labour thou shalt have rest. Thou hast not yet reached thy journey's end, but thy sister is in the haven." And a little before he says, "Martha was troubled how she might feed the Lord, Mary anxious to be fed by Him." And again, "Carefulness for many things passes away, but the love of one thing lasts for ever." And Laurentius Justinianus says, "An active life is an anxious one, but a life of contemplation possesses a lasting joy. The one obtains a kingdom, while the other perceives only. In the one the world is despised, in the other God will be manifest, for 'My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.'" Isaiah xxxii. 18.

Again S. Gregory writes, "The active life ends with this world; for in the next who can give bread to the hungry where there is no hunger—or drink to the thirsty where there is no thirst. But the contemplative life begins here on earth, to be perfected in heaven; for the fire of divine love which is kindled here, burns brighter in the presence of God, who is its object."

See also Cassian, who says amongst other things, "In the future world all will pass from the many distractions of life and from actual work, to be absorbed in the love of God and in the contemplation of the Deity."

Observe, as against Calvin, that Martha is the type of the active life, and that Mary, sitting silently at Jesus' feet, insensible

to what was going on around because of her rapt attention to the words of Christ, a type of the contemplative. S. Bernard and others.

But what is contemplation? S. Augustin (or whoever else may be the author of the treatise *De Spiritu et Animo*) answers, "It is the joyful admiration of a manifest truth." But S. Bernard defines contemplation as "the uplifting of the mind to God, whereby we gain a forestate of the joys of happiness eternal." Others again say, "It is the sure intuition of the soul or its undoubted apprehension of the truth." But Gerson, following Hugo, says, "It is to be dead to all carnal desires, and to taste how sweet the Lord is. As David rejoiced in the living God (Ps. lxxxiv. 9), and declared God to be his portion for ever." Ps. lxxiii. 25.

S. Gregory also (*hom.* 14 *in Ezek.*) thus describes the duties of each kind of life:—"The active life consists in giving bread to the hungry, in teaching the ignorant, reclaiming those who are in error, caring for the sick, and in ministering to the necessities of all, specially to the necessities of those committed to our trust. But he who would lead a life of contemplation must ever keep in mind the love of God and of his neighbour, and refraining from acting on this love, look with the longing expectation of a heart wholly fixed on heaven for the glory which shall be revealed."

Hence S. Thomas says, "The contemplative life, although mainly intellectual, originates in the affections, inasmuch as it springs out of the love of God, and the end of such a life is like the beginning, for delight at the sight of that which we love increases our love for it."

The contemplative life therefore causes a man to rise superior to the world, its trials and temptations, and to count all things as valueless in comparison with God, and gives perfect peace, because, S. Bernard says, "God wrapt all things in a holy calm, and to gaze on Him is to be at rest." But this life of contemplation is preceded by an active life of mortification and self-denial, for as the fruit follows after the flower, so from a monk does a man become a hermit. Therefore S. Basil and other ascetics say that the monastic life is a

fitting preparation for that life of contemplation to which the hermits are devoted.

And so the Church has rightly appointed this portion of scripture to be read on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin because she rendered to Christ the service both of Martha and of Mary, and chose that good part, of which she will never be deprived.

CHAPTER XI.

1 *Christ teacheth to pray, and that instantly.* 11 *Assuring that God so will give us good things.* 14 *He, casting out a dumb devil, rebuketh the blasphemous Pharisees.* 28 *And sheweth who are blessed.* 29 *Preacheth to the people,* 37 *and reprehendeth the outward shew of holiness in the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers.*

AND it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, tempting *him*, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided

against itself is brought to desolation; and a house *divided* against a house falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.

27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

40 *Ye* fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware *of them*.

45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

46 And he said, Woe unto you also, *ye* lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Ver. 2—*When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.* S. Matthew adds this prayer to the sermon on the mount, whilst S. Luke places it at a later period. Either, therefore, Christ taught His disciples this prayer on two separate occasions, or S. Matthew added it to the sermon on the mount, in order to make that sermon a complete summary of evangelical doctrine.

Here we may observe, that S. Matthew makes this prayer consist of seven petitions, but S. Luke of five. The latter evangelist unites

two, because they are contained in the others. Hence, because S. Luke omits the last petition, "deliver us from evil," the Pelagians argued that although we might pray against being led into temptation, we ought not to pray for deliverance from evil.

Ver. 5.—*And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight.*

At midnight, i.e. at a most inconvenient time.

Christ puts forth this parable to teach His disciples not to be disheartened, nor to cease to pray because their petitions are unanswered, but to persevere, for if they do this, God will listen to their prayers and grant them their requests.

Ver. 6.—*For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.* My friend, hungry and wearied with his journey, seeks refreshment, and I have nothing to set before him.

Ver. 7.—*And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not.* He makes excuse that he cannot wake his children from their sleep and disturb his household.

Ver. 8.—*I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.*

Importunity—*ἀναίδειαν*, *i.e.*, impudence, used as the Latin word impudens—*e.g.*, labor impudens (*i.e.* unceasing labour) omnia vincit.

Here S. Augustine asks, "Why because of his importunity? Because he continued to knock and did not go away because his request was denied him. He who was unwilling to give what his friend had need of, gave at last because the other continued his demands. Much more then will God who in His goodness bids us make known our requests to Him, and is displeased with those who seek Him not, grant our requests."

God wills that we should continue instant in prayer, and is pleased with our "importunity," for persistent prayer is "violence pleasing to God." Tertullian.

Ver. 9.—*And I say unto you, ask and it shall be given you.* (See S. Matt. vii. 7.)

Ver. 12.—*Or if he shall ask an egg.* This verse is omitted by S. Matthew. An egg, because of the nourishment it contains.

Ver. 27.—*And it came to pass as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him*, &c., i.e. Thou art so holy and so blessed, O Christ, that because of thee thy mother must be also blessed. Although she was ignorant of the mystery, this woman was moved by the Holy Spirit to declare that Christ was born of a virgin mother. Some suppose that the woman here mentioned was S. Martha or her handmaid S. Marcella. However, had it been Martha, in all probability S. Luke would have said so, since he so frequently in the chapter preceding makes mention of her name.

But Marcella is said to have incurred the enmity of the Scribes because she thus openly spoke in praise of Christ, and to have been by them condemned to death a little after the crucifixion, and there is a tradition that, together with Martha, Mary Magdalene, and Lazarus, she was exposed in an open boat without sails or oars, but that it with its living freight was by the providence of God brought safe to shore at Marseilles.

Blessed is the womb that bare thee. For it was the abiding place of the Son of God. Hence Methodius says of the Blessed Virgin: "Thou didst conceive Him who comprehended all things. Thou didst bear Him in thy womb by whose word all things are sustained. For she is the chariot of the true Solomon, of whom it is written, 'King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love.'" Cant. iii. 9.

Hence Gregory of Nicomedia calls her "the glorious throne and royal chariot on which the Incarnate Word was carried when He visited the earth. And S. Bernard says, Ignatius, in the many letters which he wrote to the Blessed Virgin, addresses her as "Christofera," which is indeed a noble title conveying with it infinite honour; for to be the servant of Christ is to be a ruler and prince, and to bear Him is to be ennobled, not burdened. And the same writer, commenting on Rev. xii., goes on to say, "How great favour

hast thou found in the sight of God, how very nigh hast thou been brought to Him! He abides in thee, and thou in Him. Thou didst provide Him a garment, and in turn thou are clothed upon by Him. He received of thee the garment of the flesh; He clothed thee with the glory of His majesty. Thou didst clothe the sun with a cloudy covering, and thou thyself art encircled with its splendours."

Rightly therefore may we sing of the mother of our Lord: "Thou art the exaltation of Jerusalem. Thou art the great glory of Israel. Blessed be thou of the Almighty Lord for evermore," Judith xv. 9.

Hear also the testimony of the fathers. Gregory Nazianzen, in his tragedy, "The Suffering Christ" writes:—"O queen, O mistress and blessing of the human race! be ever propitious to us mortal men: and be my safeguard wherever I may dwell." And S. Cyril (*Contra Nestorium*) says, "All praise to thee, holy mother of God, for thou art this world's pearl, an evershining light, the crown of virgins, and the sceptre of the faith;" and S. Chrysostom: "Hail, mother, the throne, the grace, the glory and the support of our Holy Church!" And again, S. Ephrem salutes her as "the hope of the Fathers, the glory of the Prophets, the praise of the Apostles, the honour of the Martyrs, the joy of the Saints, and the light of the Patriarchs of old."

Ver. 28.—*But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.* Christ does not say that His mother is not blessed, as Calvin would have us believe, but only that they are more blessed who hear the word of God and keep it, *i.e.* fulfil its precepts Because to be the mother of God is a grace and free gift of God, but external, and therefore not of necessity acting upon the soul, but to hear and keep the word is an internal grace, finding accept ance in the sight of God. Again, to be the mother of God does not absolutely ensure everlasting happiness, but to keep God's word up to death has the sure promise of eternal life. And further, to be the mother of God is, of necessity, the blessing of one virgin only, but to hear and keep the word of God, a privilege common to all believers.

Christ therefore would encourage the woman who had addressed

Him. Thou callest My mother blessed, and sorrowest that so great a privilege has not fallen to thy lot, but I offer thee a better and more lasting blessing, if thou wilt hear My word, and keep My commandments. For My mother was blessed more because she acknowledged My divinity than because she conceived Me in her womb, nay more, because, had she not recognised the purpose of God and been obedient unto His word, she would have been accounted unworthy to have become the mother of His Son; and so S. Augustine says, "The near relationship of mother would not have profited Mary had she not conceived Christ in her heart as well as in her womb. For she was more blessed in her faith than in her conception."

Ver. 34.—*The light of the body is the eye.* Figuratively the eye represents reason, intellect, especially good intention—for what the eye is to the body, such is reason or good intention to the mind.

When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light, *i.e.* illumined by a single, a clear and unclouded eye.

Ver. 36.—*If thy whole body therefore be full of light . . . the whole shall be full of light.* Not the body, but the whole man and all his faculties and powers. Maldonatus. But Toletus gives a different rendering: "If the eye, which is the principal and most noble part of the body, is full of light, then by means of it the whole body will be enlightened." *

Ver. 37.—*And as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him: and He went in, and sat down to meat.* "As he spake," As He was on a certain occasion teaching the people, say St. Augustine and others; but Maldonatus considers that reference is here made to the preceding verses. The Pharisee therefore, having heard what our Lord had previously said, asked Him, from no good motive, but, as we learn from the two last verses of the chapter, in order to find some accusation against Him.

"He sat down to meat," without having first washed His hands, after the manner of the Pharisees.

* Kinwold and others think that this verse, which does not occur in St. Matthew, is an interpolation, and that it really is a grammatical gloss on v. 34.

Ver. 38.—*And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that He had not first washed.* For the Pharisees were accustomed, before they sat down to meat, to wash not their hands only, but their arms as far as the elbow. See St. Matt. xv. 1.

Ver. 39.—*And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and platter.* Ye take care to wash the body, but are careless as to the cleansing of the heart. The word "now" gives point to the rebuke.

Ver. 41.—*But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.* τὰ ἐνόντα, quod superest. Vulgate. These words are omitted by many of the fathers, but retained in the Roman versions.

By these words we may therefore understand:

1. Such things as we possess. So Tertullian (*lib.* iv. 27 *Contra Marc.*). But St. Basil and Euthymius explain them as meaning "what we have in store," or what we have at hand, what we have not consumed. Vatablus. Others think that the words mean "what we have not acquired wrongfully, for such things must be restored, and not given in charity." Others, again, such things as we have in our power and at our disposal, that by giving of these we may make amends for our many misdeeds, may break off our iniquities, by showing mercy to the poor. Dan. iv. 24.

2. Toletus thinks, from a consideration of v. 39, that by τὰ ενόντα we must understand the things within. "Ye, O Pharisees, make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness, for ye have obtained what ye eat and what ye drink by robbery and injustice. Cleanse yourselves therefore of your sins. Restore what you have gained unjustly and give alms of such things as ye lawfully possess." Thus, Zaccheus said, "The half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. St. Luke xix. 8.

3. Theophylact considers that our Lord here goes to the root of the evil, and would have the Pharisees cast out of their hearts τὰ ἐνόντα, *i.e.* their inordinate love of riches.

4. But we may interpret the passage more forcibly as meaning, There is but one remedy for your past sins and extortions: give alms; this is a duty which comes before all others, this is the sum and substance of the whole matter. Bede.

5. Lastly, some would read the verse thus: Give alms of such things as you may lawfully dispose of, τὸ ἐνὸν, what is lawful, *i.e.* of such things as are your own, and not the property of others. Give freely, and not because you are under any obligation to give.

And behold all things are clean unto you. Some think that these words were spoken in irony; but the general opinion of the fathers is that we must understand them seriously; but how—

1. Certain are of opinion that the sins of robbery and violence are pardoned through the giving of alms, even although no previous restitution has been made. But this is a manifest error, for S. Augustine says, "no sin is remitted, unless restitution is made," for restitution of that which has been wrongfully acquired is due under every law, natural, human, or divine.

2. S. Augustine understands by "almsgiving" every good work, including even penitence itself, for "How," he asks, "can you be merciful to another, if you are unmerciful to yourself? To have compassion on your own soul is to be pleasing to God." He therefore who repents of his sins, has compassion on his own soul; for almsgiving is whatever is done by a profitable compassion. To "give alms" means "devote thyself to good works, to works of charity and of penitence, for these will make you clean."

3. But we may take the words really in this sense. "All things, whether external, as the body, or internal, as the soul, are made clean, not by ceremonial washings, as ye think, but by alms given out of τὰ ἐνόντα, "that which is thine own." See preceding section 5.

For by almsgiving we obtain the pardon of our venial offences, and are placed in the way of obtaining the remission of even mortal sin, if, that is to say, our almsgiving is the fruit of true contrition which includes within itself the perfect love of God.

We must therefore understand that the giving of alms makes all things clean, if it be accompanied by faith, hope, contrition, and

such other things as are required by scripture for the remission of sin, and if the almsgiver does not again return to his evil ways. Hence, according to the teaching of Christ and His apostles, we are saved by faith, and that not alone, but accompanied by penitence and love.

Origen, SS. Cyprian, Ambrose and others, explain that almsgiving is a remedy for every sin, but chiefly for extortion and robbery and such sins as are contrary to itself. For it is a remedy against avarice, which is the root of the evil. Because he who is liberal and compassionate neither envies, robs, nor wrongs any one. Hence Theophylact calls almsgiving "the daughter of godlike love and charity;" and S. Cyril, on Dan. iv., declares the giving of alms to be better than fasting, for that which can be applied to all wounds is no valueless medicament. See also S. Matt. xxii.

Ver. 45.—*Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto Him, Master, thus saying Thou reproachest us also.* ὑβρίζεις, blamest or dishonourest. Thou accusest us, and that openly, of much wickedness. But Christ exposed the wickedness of the Scribes, not to disgrace them, but to lead them to amend their lives; or, if that were impossible, to prevent others from following their evil example. So S. Cyril says, "To be convicted of error is to the proud intolerable, but to the humble a great means of advancement." Bede: "How wretched is that conscience which thinks itself insulted whenever it may happen to hear the word of God." Yet even now the wicked, when a preacher attacks vices which they are conscious of committing, think themselves aggrieved and persecute the man who warns them of their sin.

Ver. 47.—*Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets.* Christ does not rebuke the Scribes for building these sepulchres, but because they sought to persecute and slay Him and His apostles, who were as the prophets of old. See S. Matt. xxiii.*

* Although from comparing S. Matt. xxii. 35 with S. Mark xii. 28 and S. Luke v. 17, with the 21st verse of the same chapter and with S. Mark ii. 6, the Scribes seem to be the same as the Lawyers, yet we may assume that there was this difference between them: the lawyer was one conversant with the law, but the scribe one who publicly taught or practised it.

"Ye act, O ye Scribes, in accordance with the example of your fathers. They killed the prophets and ye bury them, as robbers bury those whom they have plundered and slain. Ye act thus out of pretended reverence and zeal, yet ye are but imitations of your fathers, for ye seek to kill Me and My disciples, and by so doing fill up the measure of their iniquity." But Suarez explains these verses thus, "Inasmuch as ye imitate your fathers in your persecution of Christ and His apostles, ye seem to build these sepulchres more to commemorate the act of the slayer, than out of any desire to honour the slain."

Ver. 52.—*Woe unto you, lawyers!* Ye have usurped, as S. Ambrose renders the Greek ἤρατε, the key of knowledge, *i.e.*, the teaching of the law and the interpretation of scripture. Ye have used this knowledge for your own evil purposes, and have prejudiced the people against Me and the salvation which I came to bestow. Thus ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in, S. Matt. xxiii. 13.

Thus S. Ambrose and Tertullian; and S. Cyril, who understands the key of knowledge to mean the law, the sign of the justice of Christ, and adds, Faith also is the key, because by means of it we retain the knowledge and the truth, for "unless ye believe ye will not understand." These men therefore shut up the kingdom of heaven, for they neither explained the law as testifying to Christ, nor did they suffer men to believe on Him.

Figuratively, S. Augustine (*lib.* ii. *Quæst. Evang.*), alluding to Isa. xxii. 22, and Rev. iii. 7, says, The key of knowledge is humility, which these lawyers themselves understood not, and were unwilling that others should understand.

Ver. 53. *And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently.* "To urge Him vehemently," δεινῶς συνέχειν; but the Vulgate has "to insist," as if ἐνέχειν "and to provoke Him to speak of many things," ἀποστοματίζειν, *i.e.* to catch something out of His mouth that they might accuse Him—to seek an immediate answer to their crafty questionings, and to confuse Him in His talk. Euthymius

and Theophylact. But Maldonatus thinks that ἀποστοματίζειν should be rendered "to shut His mouth," *i.e.* to put Him to silence. But the Scribes did not wish to silence Christ, but on the contrary to provoke Him to say something against the law or against Cæsar, whereof they might accuse Him.

They said therefore, Thou hast derided our ceremonies, and broken the tradition of our fathers, v. 38. Thou hast rebuked us because we tithe mint and rue, v. 42. Thou hast charged us with loving the uppermost seats, and therefore Thou hast blamed Moses who assigned them to us, v. 43. Thou hast forbidden us to honour the prophets, v. 47. Thou hast deprived us of the key of knowledge, which the whole synagogue has committed to our care, v. 52. Thou desirest therefore to be wiser than Moses, and to overthrow the law, and the ordinances of God.

Ver. 54.—*Laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth.* θηρεῦσαί, "to hunt for," that they might accuse Him to Caiaphas or Pilate. For Euthymius says, "They thought by their rapid questionings to lead Him to commit Himself to some rash statement; but He answered them in all things wisely, for He answered nothing but what had been well thought out aforehand, and He spake unmoved by any human passion."

They trusted that in anger, or in excitement, he would have said something with which they could find fault, for men in the heat of argument oftentimes make statements which they regret and are compelled to retract. Not so with Christ, calm and unmoved, His words were truth.

CHAPTER XII.

1 *Christ preacheth to his disciples to avoid hypocrisy, and fearfulness in publishing his doctrine:* 13 *warneth the people to beware of covetousness, by the parable of the rich man who set up greater barns:* 22 *we must not be over careful of earthly things,* 31 *but seek the kingdom of God,* 33 *give alms,* 36 *be ready at a knock to open to our Lord whensoever he cometh:* 41 *Christ's ministers are to see to their charge,* 49 *and look for persecution:* 54 *the people must take this time of grace,* 58 *because it is a fearful thing to die without reconciliation.*

IN the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

9. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

10 And whosóever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and *unto* magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

35 Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning;

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season?

43 Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken.

46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

49 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

54 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

55 And when *ye see* the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 *Ye* hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that you do not discern this time?

57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as *thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last mite.

Ver. 1.—*In the mean time when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people.* The Greek has "the myriads of the multi-

tude." A myriad contains exactly ten thousand, and is consequently taken for an innumerable multitude, as here.

Ver. 2.—*Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees.* Beware, says Bede, that you do not imitate the hypocrites, for the time will certainly come when both your virtue and their hypocrisy will be revealed to all. I have explained the remainder on Matt. x. 26.

Ver. 13.—*And one of the multitude said unto Him.* My brother is injuring me, for he wishes to seize the whole of our father's property, and he will give me no share of it. Command him therefore to do me justice, for Thou by Thy authority canst do this with a word, which I cannot effect by many suits and much litigation. For it is Thy office to defend the right and assist the oppressed, for Thou art the Lord of justice.

Ver. 14.—*But He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?* The word "man" is a Hebraism for an unknown person, as in chap. xxii. 58, Peter said, "Man, I am not," and v. 60, "Man, I know not what thou sayest." The meaning is, This is a matter of the courts which dispose of secular questions: it has no part in Me, who teach and dispense a heavenly heritage. Christ does not here deny that He has judicial power, for He was the King of kings and the Lord of lords; but He wished to use His power over a covetous man to cure him of his greed, and to teach him to prefer heavenly to earthly things, and to give way willingly to them, according to His own words, vi. 29, "From him that taketh away thy cloke withhold not thy coat also." "He rightly sets aside earthly things," says S. Ambrose, "who came down to us for heavenly ones. Hence this brother is rebuked not undeservedly, for he would fain have occupied the dispenser of heavenly things with those of earth." At the same time He taught that ecclesiastics and spiritual persons ought not to meddle with secular things, but to employ themselves in divine ones, as S. Paul says, 2 Tim ii. 4, "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life." So S. Ambrose, Euthymius, Bede, and de Lyra from S. Augustine (*serm.* 196)—that is, unless the faithful have any suit; secular Bishops in

former ages used to settle these, as S. Augustine says that he has done. *Lib. de Opere Monachor*, c. 29.

And He said to them, "as well to His disciples," the Syriac says, "as to the multitude," especially to him who had spoken about his brother dividing the property, *Take heed.* In this contention of brothers how much ill was caused by avarice. Whilst one from avarice refused to divide the inheritance, the other, with too much cupidity and out of all season, urged the division. Strife and dissention arose among them. Not only should we guard against the lust of seizing what is another's, but also from too great cupidity to get possession of what is our own, for they who are too eager for earthly riches, neglect heavenly ones. S. Augustine, in his 28th *Sermo. De diversis:* "Not only is he avaricious who seizes what is another's, but he also who covetously keeps his own." The Arabic has, "See and beware of all evil—for avarice is the cause of all evil," as in 1 Tim. vi. 10, "The love of money is the root of all evil."

For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. That is, it is not because a man abounds in riches that his life is abundant, so as to be longer and happier on that account, for it is shortened and made unhappy from the anxiety and luxury which attend upon great wealth. The Syriac version has, "Life is not in the abundance of riches;" the Arabic, "Man has not abundance in his much wealth"—that is, abundance does not prolong our lives, but rather shortens them. Theophylact says, "The measure of life is not contained in its abundance. For he who has great possessions does not live longer for them, nor does length of life attend upon the multitude of his riches;" and Euthymius, "Not because a man abounds in riches, does his life abound from such abundance. The measure of his life does not depend upon this." The meaning is, Thou, O man, who greedily seekest a heritage from thy brother, seekest it that thou mayest live long and comfortably. But thou errest; for the rich, from their cares and the gluttony they indulge in, often pass short and miserable lives. If thou wouldest live long and profitably, despise money, be poor in spirit, entrust thy hopes and wealth to God alone, for He is the only

giver of length of life and happiness. To show this Christ adds the following parable. S. Augustine, *On Abel and Cain*, i. 5, at the end: "If thou seek treasures, choose the unseen and hidden, those which are to be found in the highest heavens, not sought in the veins of the earth. Be poor in spirit and thou shalt be rich by every reckoning; for the life of man consists not in the abundance of his wealth, but in virtue and faith. These riches make us rich indeed, if we be rich in God."

Ver. 16.—*And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.* The ground in the Greek (χώρα) means a large extent of land, a number of fields.

And he reasoned with himself saying, What shall I do? &c. Behold the care, behold the poverty of this rich man—he who is overflowing with wealth and receptacles has need of some place in which to store his goods. He is in doubt and perplexity, says Euthymius, as if he were really poor, though he is in truth wealthy. And S. Basil, in his homily on these words of Christ: "The earth did not return fruits but lamentations; for this unhappy man is afflicted quite as much as they who are oppressed by want, and he cries out saying, 'What shall I do?' Does not he who is in straits from his poverty utter the same words? and he who has to beg?" From all the good things that flowed in upon him he derived no gratification. They rather annoyed his mind and troubled him.

Ver. 17.—*My fruits.* "Did he not," says S. Basil, "collect his crops and incur the reputation of avarice when he called them his own?" For how many dangers are there before the harvest is gathered in. The hail often beats it down, and the heat snatches it out of the very grasp, and rains suddenly rush down from the mountains and sweep it away.

Ver. 18.—*And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns,* &c. All the harvests collected in past years. He took counsel of his cupidity, not of his charity, which would have said to him, "Spend them on the poor." "Dost thou want barns? Thou hast them in the bellies of the poor," says S. Basil; and S. Ambrose (*Lib. de Naboth, cap.* vii.), "Thou hast storehouses; the bosoms of the

poor, the houses of widows and orphans, the mouths of infants. Let these be thy barns, and they will last thee for ever." S. Basil again, in the homily above: "He is a despoiler who, when he receives what he ought to dispense, considers it as his own. The bread thou hast is the bread of the famishing, thy robe is the robe of the naked, thy silver that is buried in the ground is the silver of the indigent: wherefore dost thou wrong so many poor whom thou mightest support?" He adds, "And when thou hast filled thy barns, what wilt thou do with the harvest of the following year? Wilt thou pull them down again and build new ones for ever? Thou wilt always be consuming thy substance and thy wealth in pulling down the old and building new, that the fruits which sprang from the earth may return to it again. Thou wilt not bestow them upon the poor, because thou enviest others the use of them, and thus, when earth restored them again to thee, thou deprivest all men of their benefit, nay even thyself; for as corn, falling into the ground, brings gain to the sower, so thy bread, if thou gavest it to the hungry, would bring thee much profit hereafter."

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. This rich man again errs and commits sin. First, in promising himself very many years, when he was to die that night. "He who promised himself a long life did not see the following day," says S. Gregory (22 *Moral.* chap. 6). And S. Cyril, in the *Catena*, "Thou hast fruits in thy barns, O rich man, but whence hast thou many years?" Secondly, in giving himself up to gluttony and luxury, saying, "Eat, drink, and be merry like an Epicurean." For after death is no enjoyment.

Take thine ease. To the plague of avarice is joined that of sloth, says the Gloss. "If you had the soul of a sow," says S. Basil, "what else could you propose for yourself?—you are so brutish, so ignorant of the soul's good, that you indulge it in carnal gratification." Being wholly of the flesh, you make yourself a slave to its lusts. An appellation worthy of you, was bestowed upon you, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee."

S. Ambrose (*Lib.* ii. *de Interpell. in Job* c. 5) says wisely, "A great

incitement to fall away is an influx of prosperity. It makes us supine puffs us up, causes forgetfulness of its author."

Ver. 20.—*But God said unto him.* God said this, not in word but in deed, sending him a fever or some other mortal disease, and causing his conscience by this means to speak thus to him. "God said this to the rich man," says Euthymius, "through his conscience, which, as he felt death coming upon him, said this to him."

Thou fool. Because in thy plan, in which thou appearedst to thyself wise, thou now perceivest that thou wast a fool.

This night. "His soul, which would take no heed of light, and which was tending on to Gehenna, was taken in the night." Gregory, *Moral., lib.* xv. 11.

Shall be required. (Repetunt, απαιτοῦσιν, Greek). They require: that is, God and His angels, who are His instruments, not by misfortune but by the just judgment of God, as if against His will.

Thy soul. "That thou mayest give account of all thy fruits and of the riches and other property which God has given to thee." So Toletus. They seek it again, because thy soul does not die with the body, but is immortal; thy soul, too, is not thy own, but God's, who breathed it into thee and entrusted it to thee as a sacred gift. Rightly, therefore, does He now seek it of thee again by a sudden death. Hear S. Jerome on the death that is imminent on all (*Ep.* iii. *to Heliodorus*): "Xerxes, that most mighty king, who overthrew mountains, who controlled seas, when he had viewed from a lofty place an infinite multitude of men and an immense army, is said to have wept, because after a hundred years none of those whom he then saw would be surviving. Oh, if we could ascend such a tower from which we could see the whole earth under our feet! I would show you the ruins of the world—nations in strife with nations—kings with kings—and, not the army of Xerxes alone, but the inhabitants of the entire globe, who are now alive, in a short space of time passed away."

And the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? "They shall not only not belong to thee," says Euthymius, "they shall not be thine; but thou dost not know whose they will be—whether thy heir's or a stranger's, a friend's or an enemy's;—and this increases

thy grief." S. James says, "They shall eat your flesh as fire" (v. 3); and S. Ambrose, "The things that we cannot carry with us are not our own. Virtue alone is the companion of the dead. Mercy alone follows us—and mercy alone gains abodes for the departed." S. Augustine: "The purse contains that which Christ receives not" (*Hom.* 48, *inter.* 50). Well says the wise man, "What fortune has lent let her take, what nature has changed let her seek again, what virtue has gained she will retain." See what I have collected from the Fathers on vanity and the perniciousness of riches on Isaiah v. 9.

Ver. 21.—*So is he that layeth up treasure for himself.* Such an end and such a death did the rich covetous man meet who had not laid up treasure toward God. It will be asked, Who is rich towards God? I answer—He who has by alms and other good works many merits and safeguards hidden up as treasures before God, and who day by day hides more, as the apostle teaches at length, 1 Tim. vi. 17 and following. See what is said thereon.

Secondly, "He is rich in God who studies to please God alone, who fixes all his hope and love on God, who rests wholly on Him, that he may be blessed by Him and made eternally happy." "He is rich," says the Gloss, "whose expectation is the Lord, and whose substance is with God." "The rich in God," says S. Augustine, "is poor in gold" (*Serm.* xxviii. *de verb. Apostoli*)—that is, poor in spirit, as St. Peter was when he said to the lame man, "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk," Acts iii. On Ps. xl. he says, "When Christ was rich He became poor, that by His poverty He might make you rich. He enriches the truly poor, He brings the falsely rich to poverty. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,'" Matt. v. 3. "Let us endeavour," says Theophylact, "to be made rich in God, that is, to have trust in Him, that He may have our wealth and the granary of it, and not call our goods our own but God's, and if they are God's, let us not deprive Him of His own. This is to be rich in God, to believe that if I give Him all things and empty myself, nothing that is needful for

my good shall ever fail me. God is my storehouse, which I will open and take from it all of which I have need."

Thirdly, He who is rich, that is liberal, in God, is charitable to the poor. For what is done to them God holds to be done to Himself and rewards it. "Let him," says Bede, "who wishes to be rich in God, not lay up treasure to himself, but distribute his possessions among the poor." The meaning is good, but it is not complete: for Christ is not speaking here exclusively of almsgiving, but of the true riches, which He declares to be not the fruits of the ground and the wealth of mines, but virtues and good works, for these procure us long life and blessing, as well in this world as in the world to come.

Fourthly, S. Augustine, in his 44th Discourse on the Temptation, teaches that "he is rich to God who is full of love and therefore of God." "God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him," 1 John iv. 16. "If you have love you have God. What has the rich man if he have not love? If a poor man have love, what has he not? You think him rich perhaps whose chest is full of gold; and is he not so whose conscience is full of God? He is truly rich in whom God deigns to dwell." S. Augustine.

Lastly, The rich man toward God is one who abounds in every virtue. So S. Ambrose explains at length (*lib.* iv. *epis.* 27) to Simplicianus, whose words I have cited on 1 Peter iii. 4, "That which is not corruptible, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

In allegory. The rich toward God are the blessed who enjoy God and all His works. S. Augustine (*Serm.* 74 *de Temp.*) teaches that the blessed alone are happy, both because they possess God, and want nothing. "He," he says, "is truly rich who wants nothing, but the blessed alone want nothing—the blessed alone are truly happy." He says in the preface of Psalm xli., "Christ was rich to the Father, and poor to us—rich in heaven, poor on earth—rich as God, poor as man."

S. Ambrose in his Epistle to Demetrias, wisely says, "By what price can the repose of this world be more fitly purchased than by the restoration to the world itself of all riches, all dignities, and all

desires; and the purchase of Christian liberty by a holy and happy community by which the sons of God, from having been poor will be made rich, from patient will become brave, from humility be exalted?"

Ver. 29.—*Neither be ye of doubtful mind.* (The Greek and the Vulgate say, "Be ye not lifted up on high.") Cornelius comments on this reading, this passage is explained in many different ways. S. Clement of Alexandria (*Pæd. lib.* ii. 10) says, "Be not led away from the truth to wish for a higher wisdom than faith teaches."

Secondly, S. Augustine (*Lib.* ii. *Quæst.* 29, *Evang. Quæst.*): "Be not puffed up with pride because you have much food and clothing. For to be proud of having abundance of provision, is like a wounded man boasting that he has many plasters at hand, when it would have been well for him not to have needed any."

Euthymius: "Be not dragged down from lofty and heavenly concerns to earthly ones, so as to study and pursue not the former but the latter." Theophylact: "Be not unstable, always imagining what is above you, as they do who are not content with the present but are always looking on to something greater."

Fifthly and best: Be not anxious about the heavenly bodies over your head—the constellations of the stars and their courses—the shifting of the clouds—the breath of the winds, so as to judge from them of the future abundance or deficiency of your crops; as in Jer. x. 2, "Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them;" and Eccles. xi. 4, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." So Toletus, Vatablus, &c. Vatablus says, "Be not uneasy, as one who turns his face askance to the heavens from anxiety." "Be not wavering in your minds as a pendulum in the air, looking to human assistance in different directions, and not anchoring on the providence of God." The Arabic version says, "Be ye not anxious." For all things point in this direction, that Christ will remove from us too great anxiety as to our support and clothing, and will impress on us a sure confidence in God by which to look with certainty to His Fatherly providence for all these things. The Greek word μετέωρος conveys

the idea of one whose mind is in doubt and suspense and is unfixed, who will judge by the result, and is, as Gaza calls it, "wavering" (pensilis). Others render it, "Do not look out from afar off," or as we commonly say, Do not make a long discursus, as though you would have no room for a Divine Providence, or as if you doubted of it. And F. Lucas: "Be not over-anxious, as looking out with anxiety for what may happen in the far distant future, and taking thought long before for your future bodily needs, and looking forward in the distant times to come with solicitude about your food and clothing, as S. Matthew clearly explains it, 'Be not therefore anxious for the morrow,'" vi. 34. All these words tend to the same point, forbidding us to show too great anxiety for the future, and directing us to resign it into the hands of Providence; to trust in it and securely rest upon it. Following this precept of Christ, S. Thomas wished and ordered all his brotherhood to live for the day and reserve nothing for the morrow, but to give what was over and above their day's need to the poor; as being confident that God would provide for the morrow, as He did to Elijah and Paul the first hermit, sending them food daily by a raven; and as the children of Israel, who were certainly three millions, were fed daily in the desert with manna sufficient for their support, which was rained down upon them from heaven for forty years, while their clothes remained undamaged and perfect and even grew with the growing children.

Ver. 32.—*Fear not, little flock.* Fear not lest your food and raiment fail you, and lest, if you lay aside all anxiety and sell your goods and give to the poor, these things should not be added to you; if you seek firstly the kingdom of God. "Little flock,"—little, because, firstly, the faithful were so few and these poor either in position and property, or in election and feeling, or in spirit; for they despised the riches of the world that they might strive after those of heaven, and therefore, they were little in the eyes of the world, they were of no account, and were despised. But now that the faith of Christ has so spread throughout the whole world, that kings and princes are subdued to it, it is no longer a little flock but a most

ample and powerful church. Secondly, the flock of faithful men is little if compared with the angels who are without number, says Euthymius, according to the words, Dan. vii. 10, "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him."

Thirdly, The flock is little if compared with the immense multitude of unbelievers and wicked. Bede adds, "It is called a little flock either on account of its humility or in comparison with the greater number of the reprobate. Then all the faithful, from the example of Christ, will willingly reduce themselves to Christian humility and poverty, especially the apostles and disciples of Christ. Hence Christ says, 'Sell that thou hast.'" It appears that "flock" (pusillus) is here put in the nominative instead of the vocative as is done in other passages. This nominative is more forcible and significant than the vocative would be. Wherefore, although we might explain it by adding something, *e.g.*, Fear not, you who are a little flock, that the nominative might remain, yet the nominative is more tersely and strongly put for the vocative by adding nothing. Fear not then, O ye faithful, for although you are a little flock, God estimates you highly, and has a great and peculiar care of you, and Christ the Lord is your shepherd, who will feed you abundantly, according to the words, "I am the good Shepherd" (S. John x. 11), and the others (Ps. xxiii. 1, 2), "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing"—"He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort." S. Peter Chrysologus (*serm.* xxii.): "A small flock to the world is a large one to God;" and (xxiii.): "Humility has gained what pride lost, and the little flock has subdued entire and various savagenesses (nations) by its meekness; for the little flock conquered and destroyed as many kinds of beasts as it subdued nations to the yoke of Christ. It did this not by bearing but by suffering, not by fighting but by dying for Christ."

It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. To you who are not slow, not idle, not presuming on the mere mercy of God, but who hear My words and truly obey them; who therefore bear your cross after Me, mortify your passions, and are continually

zealous in good works. "To give," not absolutely, but upon conditions—namely, that you persevere in My faith and love and in obedience even to death—for to Judas, who afterwards apostatised from Christ, the kingdom was not given. Christ gives the reason why the disciples, though a little flock and poor, should not fear lest needful things should be withheld from them, for He says, "Since God so loved you as to destine you for heavenly riches and the kingdom of God, He will assuredly not refuse you these worthless earthly riches, as far as they are necessary for your journey towards the kingdom of heaven, and that you may adorn it by your life and conversation." So S. Cyril, in the *Catena*, "He who has given you gifts of such great price, how will He be not merciful to you but suffer you to perish of hunger?"

Ver. 33.—*Sell that ye have, and give alms.* This is a counsel, not a precept, as Pelagius would have it, who said that all Christians ought to be poor, from the precept of Christ. This is shewn by the words of Christ (Matt. xix. 21), "If thou wouldst be perfect, go sell that thou hast and give to the poor." That you may study evangelical perfection, sell what you possess and give the price to the poor, that you may follow Me who am poor in spirit in a like poverty, and with me despise earthly riches, that so you may obtain heavenly ones. Do this with the end that you may show yourselves not anxious for food and raiment, but that you depend solely on God, and look to Him for all those needs of life which He Himself has promised to all who seek His kingdom. For this reason the first Christians, following the counsel of Christ, sold all that they had and laid the price at the feet of the apostles, that they might distribute them among the poor believers (Acts ii. 3, 4). So Bede: "Fear not that you will lack the needful things of life, but rather sell what you possess for alms. This is done worthily when he who lives by the labour of his hands, despises all things, and gives alms."

Provide yourselves bags which wax not old. Wax not old, and from which, therefore, the coin of spiritual alms cannot drop out and be lost, as the money of the world often falls from the old and worn-out purses of the rich. The purses that wax not old are the bosoms

of the poor, and more especially the mind and memory of God, in which He keeps as in a purse your alms and good works, that He may return you the most ample rewards for them in the day of judgment. This He Himself explains, adding, *a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth.* From this Chrysologus rightly concludes, "What have they to do with the earth who possess heaven—what with human affairs who have gained divine ones—unless, perhaps, they find pleasure in lamentations, choose labours, delight in dangers, love the most cruel deaths, and find the evil things that are brought upon them more pleasing than the good ones?"

Ver. 34.—*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* This is a conclusion from the former, showing why our Lord said, "Sell that ye have," namely, that you may show that your heart is not in your money but in heaven. If, therefore, you place your treasure gained by alms-giving in heaven, you will show that your heart is fixed in heaven, not on earth—in God, not in gold. For a man's treasure is that which he loves—holds dear—values at a great price, on which he rests his hopes. See Matt. vi. 20.

Verses 35, 36.—*Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord when he will return from the wedding.* The Syriac says, "Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning." So the Arabic, Egyptian, Æthiopic and Persian. Christ had said that it pleased the Father to give them the kingdom. Sell therefore what you possess, and give alms, that you may, by this means, purchase this kingdom. He now urges them diligently to prepare for it as being at hand, and girding their loins, and casting aside every care, to enter upon and take possession of it. That is, Be you prepared and furnished with all graces, and good works, and merits, especially almsgiving and contempt of riches, that when Christ our Lord from heaven, and His heavenly marriage and joys, returns to you in death to judge your souls, you may meet Him and be found worthy by Him of heaven, and be brought thither by Him. He alludes to the Eastern custom as among the Hebrews and Syrians, of wearing long

robes, which they used to tuck up when travelling or at work, that they might not be in their way. (1 Kings xviii. 46; Tobit v. 5.)

Mystically. We gird our loins when we restrain the luxury of the flesh by abstinence (continentiam), says S. Gregory (*Hom.* xiii.), and S. Augustine (*serm.* xxxix. *de Verb. Dom.*), S. Basil on Isa. xv., Bede, and others. Chrysologus (*serm.* xxiv.) says, "He commands us to gird our loins by the belt of purity, and to bind our whole body in the zone of virtue, that we may go forth quickly and expeditiously to meet our Lord at His coming."

We may either unite the two verses 35 and 36 into one, with Maldonatus, making them contain one and the same parable, or we may disjoin them like Jansenius so as to make them contain two—one, the lamps burning; the other, the servants expecting their lord from the wedding.

Hence this sentence is differently explained by different persons, for those who gird themselves are divers—workmen, ministers, travellers, messengers, soldiers, porters, eremites, and their girdles are divers. Workmen are girt with the girdle of labour—ministers, of their ministry—travellers and messengers, of the road—soldiers, of warfare, whose is the girdle of hardness—porters, of constancy and patience—eremites, of abstinence, mortification, and penance.

Firstly, Of labourers girding their loins to their work, Theophylact speaks thus: "Be your loins girded;" that is, be ye ready in all ways for the work of your Lord, "and your lamps burning in your hands;" —that is, labour not in the dark and without judgment, but take the light of the word, which will show you what is and what is not to be done—for this world is night." So Euthymius and Titus, meaning, "Be you ready to every good work."

Secondly, Of those who minister to Christ and those who are poor through almsgiving (to which the words immediately preceding apply) some explain it as follows—Gird up your loins, that you may be swift and nimble to minister to Christ and His poor. On this subject there is related a notable vision in the life of John the almsgiver, who was always very ready to give to any one who asked alms of him (chap. xxix.), when a certain noble was slower

than usual in giving a loan, he was taught by a vision of a hundredfold remuneration to be quicker.

Thirdly, Of travellers girding up their loins for a journey. Some explain it thus: Gird up your loins, that you may be expeditious on your journey to heaven, from which the Word has gone before, for a grand way to it remains for you. S. Peter, *Epist.* 1, *chap.* i. 13–15, alludes to the exodus (hence called Pasch) of the Israelites. from Egypt into the promised land, which was a figure of the saints passing from earth into heaven. For God thus commanded and directed the Hebrews in the eating of the paschal lamb which was to be sacrificed for their happy journey. "Thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand" (as if girded to begin a journey), "and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. The same has to be done by Christians in mystery. See what I have said thereon.

Fourthly, Messengers and legates gird their loins that they may be the swifter in performing their office. The angels who are the messengers of God, are therefore painted with their loins girded to show that they are swift and nimble to perform the commandments of God; according to the words, "Who maketh His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire." Heb. i. 7. Christ therefore says, "O ye apostles and disciples, gird ye your loins, that you may be my messengers throughout the whole world—proclaiming the faith of the Gospel to Greeks, Romans, Italians, Gauls, Spaniards, Indians, Brazilians, Japanese, Chinese, &c. Behold I send you: Go ye therefore, eagerly, swiftly, and ardently like angels," as Isaiah, "Go ye swift messengers to a nation scattered and peeled" xviii. 2, and lii. 7, which S. Paul cites to the Romans, x. 15, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

Fifthly, Soldiers and athletes gird their loins that they may fight with more strength and courage. So do you also, O Christians, gird your loins with the girdle of strength and fortitude, that as ministers of Christ you may fight boldly against the devil, the flesh, and the world, and conquer and triumph, as S. Paul to the Ephesians, "Stand

therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness." On which I have commented at length. David also: "Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle," Ps. xviii. 39; and Job, "Gird up now thy loins like a man" xxxviii. 3; and Ex. xii. 11, "Your loins girded," for they went armed as to take possession of the promised land. Hence Origen (*hom.* ix. *in lib. Judic.*) thinks that allusion is here made to the army of Gideon who went up girded against the Midianites (Judg. vii.).

Sixthly, The porters, that they may be strong to carry heavy burthens, gird their loins. So, O ye faithful, do ye gird your loins with the girdle of patience that you may bear all adverse accidents with nobleness. So Cyril, in the *Catena*, "Be ye prompt to bear misfortunes."

Seventhly, The continent, that they may overcome the flesh and esist with success all the wicked incitements of lust, gird themselves with the girdle of continence, that is of self-abnegation and mortification, by which they reject all the wicked desires that are continually arising from concupiscence—and refuse them, and mortify them, and cut them off. So Simeon the Stylite. He tortured himself to such a degree by a knotted cord that the head (præfectus) of his monastery undid it, and dismissed him from the monastery, lest the weaker brethren should endeavour to follow his example, and from their failure become a disgrace. We have this from his disciple S. Antony, and from Theodoret, in their lives of him.

And your lamps burning. Christ commanded us to be ready, with loins girt, for good works, and for our passage to heaven. He now fitly requires our lamps to be burning, for these are needed by night whether for work or for taking a journey. For this, our life, is a mystical night, and is full of ignorance, errors, and the darkness of concupiscence; so that we have need of light and lighted lamps, that we travel on in that night and perform our work. He alludes especially to the marriage feast, which was celebrated at night with torches. That is, as in the night-time the servants await their lord on his return from his marriage with lighted torches, and go before him, so do ye watch and await me as I return to you from heaven

by death, and go before me with spiritual torches, for you know not the day and hour of your death and the coming of Christ to judgment. If you know this you will be prepared and expect Him every hour, for so the virgins with their lamps lighted await the bridegroom. Matt. xxv. This parable of Luke is mostly the same as that of Matthew.

If it be asked what the lighted lamps signify, Theophylact answers, "Firstly, they signify that we ought to have the light of reason and discretion to distinguish what we ought to do and how we ought to do it; and secondly, we should have faith, burning with love and fervour of spirit, for this will show us what to do and what to avoid, will urge us to lofty acts of virtue and incite us to teach others the way of faith and salvation, and inspire them with the love of God, and not suffer any to live in the darkness of ignorance and sin." So S. Augustine (*serm.* xxxix.) on the words of the Lord; and so S. Jerome, or whoever is the author, on Jeremiah i., who says, "that to hold a lamp in the hand is the same as to preach the Gospel."

Mystically. "These things" says Cœlestine, "have their own mysteries. For in the girding of the loins is shown purity: in the staff, pastoral rule; in the lighted lamps, the brightness of good works" (*Ep.* ii. *ad Episc. Gall.*) S. Gregory also, in his 13th homily, understands, by the shining lamps, good examples. We hold lighted lamps in our hands, he says, when by our good works we show examples of light to our neighbours. Two things are commanded us, to have our loins girded and our lamps lighted, as are innocence and purity of body, and the light of truth in our actions, for purity is of little value without a good life, or a good act without chastity.

S. Augustine again (*Lib.* ii. *Quæst. Evan.*): "Girt loins means abstinence from secular affairs, lighted lamps, the doing of the same thing with a true object and right intention." "The lighted lamps," says S. Maximus, "are prayer, contemplation, and spiritual love." Lastly, Origen (*Hom.* 9 *on Judges*) thinks that allusion is here made to the torches of the army of Gideon, and that as their sudden discovery terrified the Midianites, so the apostles and martyrs, when

their bodies had been shattered and broken by martyrdom, began to shine forth by their miracles, by which the persecutors were put to flight, and thus their doctrine and holiness shone throughout the world. As is clearly explained by Bede in his questions on the book of Judges, and Gregory at length, 30 *Moral. chap.* xxxii., and following; see Judges vii.

In your hands. These words are not found in the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic; nor in the Greek Fathers, Origen, Clement, Cyril, Chrysostom, S. Basil, Titus; nor in the Latins, S. Ambrose, Cyprian, Hilary, and Augustine (*Serm.* xxxix.) But S. Gregory has them in his 13th Homily, Irenæus (*lib.* iv. *cap.* 72), and S. Jerome, on Eph. xvi. and Jer. i., as also the codices of the Holy Scriptures corrected at Rome. "In your hands," therefore, means in your possession, that they may shed light on your works. Again, it means, that with their lamps in their hands they should go as His servants to meet Christ their Lord. From these words of Christ has arisen the custom of placing in the hands of the faithful, when in their last agony, lighted and blessed candles of wax, to show that they are going to meet Christ with faith and burning love and to excite them to it. So Amalarius, Rabanus and others who have written on Ecclesiastical Offices.

S. Cyril adds, in his fourth book on Worshipping in Spirit and in Truth, "Having your feet shod;" but no other has it, and therefore S. Cyril seems to have inadvertently copied it from S. Paul, Eph. vi. 15.

Ver. 36.—*And be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord.* This is the third precept of Christ, or rather the third part of the same precept. The first was to have their loins girt, the second to have their lights shining, the third to look for their lord. The first two are referred to this. The meaning is, Be you so prepared and ready as servants who expect their lord by night, that is, watchful, with loins girt and lamps burning. Hence Maldonatus thinks that this parable is one and identical, but consisting of three parts. Jansenius thinks that it is diverse; but it comes to the same thing, for, as I have said, this is another and the third part of the parable

to which the other two tend and are directed. "They await their lord" says Toletus, "as those who, thinking themselves strangers, burn with the desire for Christ, and frequently, nay, continually think of Him—have their minds fixed on Him; for His love and hope bear adversity and all kinds of calamities with patience; fear to offend Him as having Him at length come to them, before their eyes; despise without difficulty whatever does not make for His coming; delight in whatever they know to be pleasing to Him; hold temporal things of small account because of their hope of eternal ones."

Symbolically, The above words, "Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord," teach us (1.) That here we are as strangers journeying on to the heavenly kingdom. (2.) That we ought to outshine all others in virtue. (3.) That we should fix our hopes on the heavens, according to the words of 1 S. Peter ii. 11, 12, and 1 i. 13.

Again, S. Augustine (*serm.* 39 *de Verbis Domini*), asserts that these are the three subjects on which S. Paul exhorted Felix (Acts xxiv.) "Paul," he says, "taught continence, justice, and eternal life, for in these is contained the sum of the evangelical life." Secondly, in them are shown the three duties of the apostolic life: Firstly, the loins girded show that the Apostles were sent by Christ to preach the gospel through the whole world, and also to contend against all evil spirits, tyrannical rulers, unbelievers, and vices, according to the words of S. Luke, "I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy." Secondly, The burning lamps shew those who ought to illuminate the world by their doctrine and preaching, according to the words, "Ye are the light of the world," Matt. v. 14. Thirdly, "Be like unto men looking for their lord." This signifies those who ought to despise and tread under foot this present world and all things belonging to it, and to lead a heavenly and divine life, that their minds and hearts may be fixed on heaven, as in Phil. iii. 20, "Our citizenship is in heaven." S. Paul adds the result, the fruit, and

the reward: "From whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory." That is, We despise earthly things, we seek for heavenly ones, because we look with a certain hope for Christ, who shall beautify and make us glorious for ever. So Toletus.

These three things the early Christians always kept rooted in their minds, who as strangers upon earth and citizens of heaven willingly poured out their wealth, their honours, their pleasures, their very present life itself for Christ, because they surely looked for the coming of the Lord Christ after this short life, and for a happy and eternal one to be given to them by Him, which indeed is true wisdom and prudence. We may see this in the Pontiffs, Virgins, Roman Martyrs for three hundred years, from S. Peter to Silvester, all of whom rejoiced in ceaseless persecutions, rejoiced to be spoiled of their goods, to be imprisoned, scourged, slain, burnt, that they might enjoy (possess) Christ in heaven. Eminent amongst others was S. Cecilia, who, when flourishing in youth, beauty, wealth, nobility, of her own will most gladly gave up all things for Christ and even her life itself, in the midst of wondering, pitying, and lamenting friends, and went joyfully and exultingly to the place of martyrdom, saying, "This is not to lose my youth but to change it; this is to give clay and receive in return gold; to give a vile and miserable hovel and receive a palace most spacious, lofty, and magnificent, built of precious stones and gold; to give a perishable thing and receive one that knows no end and is subject to no death;" and soon after, "Our Lord Jesus Christ does not give pound for pound, but what He gives as a simple sum He returns a hundredfold, and adds besides eternal life." Thus is it in her Acts.

The life of a Christian then should be nothing but one looking for the coming of Christ, that He may deliver him from this life, which is so vile and miserable and subject to so many fears and perils, and bring him to His own kingdom in the heavens and to eternal life. And hence the prophets and Paul teach everywhere

that the faithful ought to live in such holiness and contempt of the things of this world, as to look eagerly and with avidity to the coming of Christ. So the patriarch Jacob when dying and longing for the coming of Christ, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord," Gen. xlix. 18; and Job, "All the days of my appointed time I will wait till my change come," xiv. 14; and the Psalms, "I have waited patiently for the Lord," xl. 1, and "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart, wait, I say, on the Lord," xxvii. 14 (Bib. version). Isa. viii. 17, "I will wait upon the Lord;" and xxv. 9, "We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Jeremiah, Lam. iii. 24, "The Lord is my portion, therefore will I wait for Him;" Micah vii. 7, "I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation." So Joseph of Arimathæa, despising all fear of the Jews, buried Christ because "he was looking for the kingdom of God," Luke xxiii. 51. S. Paul to the Romans, "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God," viii. 19; and 23, "Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our redemption, to wit, the redemption of our body;" Gal. v. 5, "We wait for the hope of righteousness;" Phil. iii. 20, "We wait for a Saviour;" Titus ii. 12, 13, "We should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God;" 2 S. Peter iii. 11, "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God?" and ver. 13, 14, "But according to His promise we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace without spot and blameless in His sight." Climacus (*de gradu*) says, "He is righteous who fears not death; he is holy and perfect who daily expects it." So S. Francis expected the Lord when he recited, as he was dying, the words of the Psalm, "The righteous shall compass me about, for

Thou shalt deal righteously with me" (Ps. cxlii. 7), and so died. And S. Bernard rejoiced—

Desidero te millies,	A thousand fold I long for Thee,
Mi Jesu quando venies,	When, Jesu, wilt Thou come to me?
Me lætum quando facies?	When shall I be, O Lord, set free?
Me de te quando saties?	And with Thyself full sated be?

Memorable and dreadful is the description of S. Bridget, in her Fourth Book of Revelations, chap. vii.: "In Purgatory there is a third and higher place where is no other punishment than the desire of coming to God and of His beatific vision. They are there tormented who, in this life, had not a perfect desire of coming to the presence of God and of enjoying the vision of Him." Bede mentions a like place in Purgatory (*Hist.* v. 13), and S. Gregory (*Dialogues* iv. 36), and Dionysius the Carthusian in his (*Dialogue de Judicio partic. artic.* xxxi.), and Bellarmine (*De Purg.* ii. 6). For there is a sort of unworthy idea and undervaluing of the great vision and glory of God because it is not desired by the faithful and the saints with ardour. This is a sign that they did not sufficiently consider His riches and joys and weigh and ponder them; as is to be expected.

Live then, O Christian, to thy Christ, not to the world; live to the Spirit, not to the flesh—live not to time but to eternity.

When He shall return from the marriage feast. This appears to be an addition to the parable, and not to be applied of necessity to what is signified by it. It may be applied thus: Christ in His Incarnation celebrated His espousals with the Church and all the faithful. When He went up into heaven He there consummated His marriage with the same Church, because by the glory of the beatific vision He is intimately and indivisibly united to all the Blessed through all eternity. When, then, He returns from the heavens to judgment, He appears to return from His heavenly marriage that He may introduce His new bride to it. His marriage then is the highest union and the highest joy that Christ has with the beatified in heaven. So S. Gregory, Bede, Theophylact, Euthymius, Toletus, and others.

That when He cometh and knocketh they may straightway open unto

Him. Christ here shows us that we ought to make our virtues ready in this life, that adorned by them in our death, we may go out with joy and rejoicing to meet Him, for there will be no time then for working, scarcely even for repentance; for the senses will be dulled and the mind oppressed by disease and scarcely able to think of its sins and its salvation. They, then, act with the utmost recklessness who, in this life, indulge in pleasures and say that they will repent on their deathbeds—for their repentance will then be forced and too late, and therefore will seldom be true, sincere, and earnest. "The Lord cometh," says S. Gregory (*Hom.* xiii.) "when He hastens to judgment; but He knocks (at the door) when by the ills of disease He designs death to be near, and we open to Him at once if we receive Him with love. Whoever dreads his departure from the body is unwilling to open to the Judge, and fears to see Him as his Judge whom he knows that he has despised. But he who is secure as to his hope and works, immediately opens, for he receives the Judge with joy, and when his death is at hand he grows glad in the glory of his reward."

Ver. 37.—*Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.* That is, with their loins girt and their lamps in their hands and expecting Him as He goes before, for He will give them their due reward, eternal blessedness, that they may enjoy the vision of God and all glory and joy for ever and ever. Hence the following explanation.

Verily, I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. Christ renders like for like—to those of His who are girt in heaven, He will gird Himself in heaven—He will serve His own servants. Those who have laboured in His service He will make to rest, and be at ease, and sup, and to those who minister to Him, He Himself, the King of kings and Lord of lords, will minister with wonderful condescension.

Shall come. The attendants and sponsi used to go round the tables to see if any one needed anything, that he might be supplied. The above words, it is plain, are to be taken as parables not in the

letter. For in heaven there are no girdles, nor persons girded, nor tables, nor sittings at meat, nor any who come or minister: Christ only intends to say, Firstly, that he who is pre-eminent before all other good masters, and immeasurably greater, will show honour to His faithful servants in heaven, so as to make them, from slaves, become as lords with whom He may share His marriage feast, that is, the happiness and glory of heaven. Secondly, That He will do it with an endless number of dishes, that is, pleasure and delights both of soul and body. Thirdly, He will see that no one wants anything: not necessaries merely, but even luxuries, and whatever he wants and wishes for. Everything wished for, nay, that can possibly be wished for, shall be supplied in superabundance according to the words "I shall be satisfied when I wake up with Thy likeness," Ps. xvii. 15; and "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house," Ps. xxxvi. 8. Fourthly, That He will give to each according to his merits this delicacy and that, for the words "He shall come" signify that there shall be a supper varied and most abundant according to the merits of each; and (those) "shall serve" (show) that it shall be most honourable, and the words "shall make them sit down," says Toletus, "shows that it shall be eternal."

He shall gird Himself. "God is girded," says Theophylact, "not as giving us the outpouring of all good things, for He moderates them. For who is able to contain all that God is?" This is seen from the seraphim who cover their eyes because of the brightness of the Divine light.

And make them sit down to meat. S. Dionysius the Areopagite, Epistle 9 to Titus, says, "The sitting at meat we consider to be rest from many labours, a life of safety and a divine kind of existence in the light and country of the living, full of all kinds of holy pleasure, with an abundant supply of all kinds of good things by which we are supplied, with Jesus rejoicing over them and placing them at His table and ministering to them and giving them eternal life, fully bestowing upon them and pouring into them all things good."

Symbolically, S. Gregory (*Hom.* 13) says, "He will gird Himself, that

is, He will prepare for the recompense and make them sit down—or, be refreshed by everlasting rest. For to sit down is to rest in the kingdom. The Lord again says, "They shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The Lord will come and minister, for He satiates us with the brightness of His light. "Come" is said of Him when He returns to His kingdom for the Judgment; for the Lord has certainly returned to us since the judgment, because from the form of His Humanity He has raised us to the contemplation of His Divinity, and He comes to lead us to the contemplation of His brightness, when Him whom we see in the judgment in His Humanity, we shall behold, after the judgment, in His Divinity.

Ver. 38.—*And if He shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants.* The first watch begins in the evening at the beginning of night, and lasts three hours. The second then begins and lasts till midnight. Then follows the third, which also lasts for three hours; then the fourth, which lasts till the dawn and the rising of the sun. Christ shows by these watches when we ought to watch and be prepared for the coming of the Lord; for the time of our death is uncertain, nor have we one day or even hour of our life of which we can be sure. The first watch is our childhood, the second our youth, the third our grown manhood, the fourth, our old age. So Titus and S. Gregory. "Christ does not," says F. Lucas, "mention so much the fourth and first watches, because He does not often come from the marriage so early or so late. The marriages are generally concluded about the middle of the night when the bride is conducted to the marriage chamber. Meanwhile, it teaches us that we ought always to watch even in advanced age and decrepitude, and that it is not enough to watch only for a time, or in youth, or in manhood, but we must persevere as long as this life lasts, because the hour of our death is uncertain, and also the coming of our Lord, even though He be long waited for." So S. Basil in his homily of not regarding secular affairs: "We ought to be prepared daily to depart from this life and to await the unchanged nod of God, that each, when the Lord comes and knocks, may immediately open to Him. Christ, besides, speaks

only of the second and third watch, because sleep in them is deeper and more heavy, to show that He would come when men least expected Him; when they were sunk in profound thoughts and cares, and, as it were, were asleep; so that wise servants should then most especially watch and be prepared, that when they seem to themselves most healthful and prosperous they may look for a sudden and treacherous death."

Toletus gives another reason. "Christ," he says, "does not make mention of the fourth watch because there are very few, who, having put off good works till old age, are then found to be doing them; and He might have made them tardy if He had spoken of the matter." From this S. Gregory concludes (*Hom.* 13), exhorting all men to holy lives, and saying, "Our Lord would not reveal the last hour to us, that it might always be looked for, and whilst we are not able to foresee it, that we should without cessation be prepared for it." Because then the hours fly apace, be careful, O most dear brethren, to be occupied with the traffic of good works. Hear what wise Solomon said: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Because then we know not the time of our death, and cannot work after it, we ought to seize the time allowed us before its arrival. Thus, by our being always in fear of it will death itself be vanquished.

Ver. 41.—*And Peter said, Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us or even unto all?* To all men, especially the faithful, as well to those who are now living as to those who shall live hereafter. Peter doubted of this, because Christ was accustomed to give some doctrines to the Apostles alone, others to all the faithful, and He had here said some things which seemed fitted only to the Apostles and men of perfect lives, as verses 32–37. The rest about watching and waiting for the coming of the Lord seemed to apply to all the faithful.

Ver. 42.—*And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward whom his lord shall set over his household to give them their portion of food in due season?* Christ replied to Peter that He spoke

indeed to all the faithful, but especially to him and the Apostles. For upon them were incumbent greater watching and care, that they might save not only themselves but others of the faithful as well. And Peter was the steward whom Christ set over His household, that is, His Church, as also the other Apostles, according to the words of S. Paul, "Let a man so account of us as of ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."

That he may give them their measure of wheat in due season. (The Vulgate has *mensuram tritici*, on which Cornelius comments). Our Lord alludes to the custom of the ancients, with whom slavery was common and severe. For servants had in abundance many things that Christians have now need of. They put one of the slaves over the mancipii, to distribute, every month, a measure (hence called demensus) of provisions and corn, wheat perhaps, or barley, if they were of inferior degree, as I have shown on Hosea iii. 2.

Secondly, wheat (tritici) may refer to time. For it is the duty of a good steward, like Joseph, when it is the season of wheat harvest, to dispense it frugally by measure to each head of a family, that it may not be sold or expended on the poor, and so there be an insufficiency for the household. I have explained the rest on S. Matt. xxiv. 45.

Observe the words "steward" and "portion." For a just steward does not give the same measure to all, but to each his own and according to his age, rank, and desert. It is the proper task of a steward to distribute what is appropriate to each. One kind and proportion of food is proper for an infant, and another for a youth, a third, for a full grown man, a fourth, for the aged—one for a man, another for a woman—one for a daughter, another for a servant—one for sons, another for slaves.

From this Christ *moraliter*, teaches, Bishops, Pastors, Confessors, Preachers, that they ought not to set forth the same food of doctrine to all the faithful, nor (in general) speak of virtues to all only in a general way, but in particular they should instil into them such as are fit and proper to their age and position. S. Paul, by his own example,

taught the praxis of this parable and sentence when he gave one kind of monition and precept to sons, another to fathers, another to servants, Eph. vi. 1 and following, and when he wrote to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 1–4; so to Titus, ii. 2, and following.

S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Bishop of New Cæsarea, followed Christ and S. Paul, as Gregory of Nyssa writes in his life: "A mourner would hear from him what would comfort him; youth were corrected and taught moderation—medicine in fitting conversation was offered to the aged, servants were taught to be well affected to their masters, masters to be kind and gentle to those under their rule; the poor were taught to hold grace the only true riches, the possession of which was in the power of every one; he who boasted himself of his wealth was aptly reminded that he was the steward and not the lord of what he had. Profitable words were given to women, suitable ones to children, and befitting ones to fathers." And S. Cyprian, as Pontius the deacon wrote in his life, used to urge maidens to a becoming rule of modesty and a manner of dress which was adapted to sanctity. He taught the lapsed penitence, heretics truth, schismatics unity, the sons of God peace and the law of evangelical prayer. He comforted Christians under the loss of their relatives with the hope of the future. He checked the bitterness of envy by the sweetness of befitting remedies. He incited martyrs by exhortation from the divine discourses. Confessors who were signed with the mark on their foreheads he animated by the incentive of the heavenly host. The same, especially, and before all others, did Pope Gregory, who kept the names of all the poor of Rome and the neighbourhood in a book, and supplied them with whatever they required. He maintained three thousand nuns in town and very many more who lived beyond the city. Hence we may truly say of him, "All the Church shall declare his alms," *Eccles.* xxxiii. How great a regard he had for souls, and what precepts he gave fitted for the salvation of each, is seen from his homilies and letters, in which he admonishes the Emperor Maurice not to withdraw soldiers from the Religious life; John the Patriarch of Constantinople not to arrogate to himself the haughty title of Universal

Bishop; Venantius the Chancellor of Italy, to resume the monastic habit which he had thrown aside; John the Bishop of Ravenna to lay down the Pallium which he had unlawfully assumed. Add to this the rules he gave and the laws he laid down for Augustine, the Apostle of England, for bringing the English to the faith of Christ; the Irish bishops that he taught not to re-baptize those who had been baptized by heretics in the name of the Trinity, and many other things. Search the iv. vol. of his letters and you will wonder that one man, taken up with so much business, and the subject of so many bodily infirmities, could enter upon so many and such important particulars, and lay down for each person directions to fit them for virtue. For prudence consists not in controlling general acts, but in directing each particular one wisely; for the performance of virtues is singular, and requires a singular direction and teaching.

Ver. 46.—*And shall cut him asunder.* That is, shall separate him from Himself, and His household, the Church triumphant; from the society of the Blessed and from the Beatitude promised to the faithful servants. See St. Jerome on Matt. xxiv.: "Shall cut him asunder, that is, shall separate him from the Communion of Saints." St. Hilary: "Shall separate him from the good promises;" Origen: "Shall cut him off from the gift of the Holy Spirit and from the society and guardianship of the Angels, for Christ will deprive him of all grace, all virtue, all help, and all hope of salvation."

And appoint his position with the unfaithful. That is, shall punish him with the other servants who were unfaithful to him, although they pretended to be the contrary. Hence Matt. xxiv. 51 has "with the hypocrites." These unfaithful are perhaps the unbelieving—they who would not believe in Christ, and of whom it is said, "He that believeth not hath been judged already." S. John iii. 18.

Ver. 47.—*And that servant which knew his lord's will and made not ready.* Did not prepare for the coming of his lord by distributing to his fellow-servants their portions of food in season, but by ill-treating them, and by debauchery, squandered the goods of his master, "he shall be beaten with many stripes."

Ver. 48.—*But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes*

shall be beaten with few stripes. That is, with fewer than he who knew his lord's will, according to the measure as well of his ignorance as of his act and fault. There are four degrees of ignorance, the first invincible, which is without blame; the second vincible, but hardly so, which has some fault and is subject to punishment; the third crass, which has more blame; the fourth wilful, which has the most blame and the heaviest punishment. Of this the xxxvi. Psalm speaks, verse 4, "He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good, he abhorreth not evil." "This man," says Euthymius, "despised everything; that one was slothful. But contempt is worse than sloth." For the slothful man knew not when he might have known, and, as Titus says, he neglected to learn and despised, and derided contemptuously. Hence it is plain against Jovinian and modern heretics that there are degrees even of mortal sin, and some are worse than others, and will therefore meet with more heavy punishment in hell, but one of a milder the other of a more severe punishment.

And to whomsoever much is given—a greater knowledge that is, and recognition of his master's will—*of him shall much be required*, by Christ the judge, and in the particular as well as general judgment. For, as S. Gregory (*Hom.* 9) says, "When gifts are increased the responsibility is increased also," *and to whom they commit much* (that is, the care and superintendence of souls), *of him will they ask the more.* "Many things," says Bede, "are entrusted to him, to whom is committed, with his own salvation, the salvation also of the flock of God. From such will Christ, His assessors the Apostles, and the other judges, require the more, not only their own safety and salvation as far as lies in them, but those also of the faithful committed to them. "In the pastor," says S. Bernard, "is required the care of souls, not the cure (cura requiritur, non curatio). The latter may be impossible from the virulence or pertinacity either of the disease or of the patient." "These things," says Titus, "clearly show the judgment of the surgeons and pastors, whilst that of the rest is not less grave and perilous. Let them not therefore show pride because of their degree and office, but discharge their duties and feed their flocks with the greater

humility, zeal, and diligence." "Each one, therefore," says S. Gregory, "ought to be the more humble and prompt to serve God, from the office given to him, as he knows himself to be *under the greater obligation of giving* account."

Again, S. Bernard (*Lib.* iv. *de Consid.*), lays down forcibly, and point by point, to Pope Eugenius III. what, and how much, God requires from Pontiffs, Bishops, and Prelates. "Consider thyself," he says, "as the form of justice, the mirror of holiness—the exemplar of piety—the assertor of the truth, the defender of the faith, the doctor of the Gentiles, the leader of Christians, the friend of the bridegroom, the ordainer of the clergy, the pastor of the people, the governor of the unwise, the refuge of the oppressed, the advocate of the poor, the hope of the wretched, the tutor of the young, the judge of widows, the eyes of the blind, the tongue of the dumb, the staff of the aged, the avenger of crimes, the dread of the wicked, the glory of the good, the rod of the powerful, the hammer of tyrants, the father of kings, the judge of the laws, the dispenser of canonries, the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the priest of the Most High, the Vicar of Christ. Who would not be struck with fear, and tremble, when he heard this, all of which is required of your see?" Thus S. Paul to the Heb. xiii. 17, on which, says S. Chrysostom, "I wonder if any guardian of souls can be saved." Cardinal Bellarmine said the same of Pontiffs. Hence wise and holy men have avoided prelacies, and have only accepted them by compulsion. S. Cyprian, in his *Epist.* 2, *lib.* iv., wrote thus of Cornelius the Pontiff: "He did not demand the popedom for himself, nor seize it by force, as others puffed up by their arrogance and pride have done, but quietly and modestly, and like others who have been divinely called to this office, he endured force lest he should be compelled to accept it." In like manner, as far as they could, SS. Gregory, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Basil, Nazianzen, Nicholas, Athanasius, shunned the office of Bishops; and in our own times Pius V., when chosen Pontiff, turned pale and almost fell into a faint. When asked the reason he frankly answered, "When I was a Religious of the Order of Benedict, I had very good hope of my salvation; when I was

afterwards made a Bishop I began to have a dread about it: now that I am chosen Pontiff I almost despair of it, for how am I to give account to God for so many thousands of souls as are in this whole city, when I can scarcely answer for my own soul?" So it is in his life. Finally, the Council of Trent declares the burthen of a Bishop's office to be one formidable to the shoulders of angels.

Ver. 49.—*I came to cast fire on the earth; and what will I, if it is already kindled?* The Arabic has, "What will I but that it be kindled?" So the Egyptian, Ethiopic, and Persian. It is uncertain whether Christ said this at the same time as the preceding. For S. Luke joins the words of Christ together, although spoken at different times. It may be connected with the preceding and following thus: Christ after much teaching of the Apostles and faithful, may, at last, have stated the primary duty that He was sent into the world by the Father to fulfil, namely, that He should send fire from heaven on the Apostles, that they, when inflamed by it, might kindle it in the rest of the other faithful; for by this the Apostles would fully and efficaciously perform the work that had been given them by Christ of evangelising the whole world and converting it to Him, and the faithful would exactly carry on the instructions of the Apostles.

Symbolically, S. Ambrose, on Ps. cxix. (*Serm.* viii.) says: "God is a light to lighten and a fire to burn up the chaff of men's vices." "He is light," he says, "to shine like a lantern for one who is walking in darkness, so that whoever seeks it in its brightness cannot err. He is fire to consume the straw and chaff of our works, as gold, the more it is refined, is better proved." So Clement of Alexandria in his exhortations to the Gentiles: "The Saviour has many voices and methods of man's salvation. In threatening He admonishes; by prohibitions He converts; with tears He pities; (in songs) He speaks through the cloud; (in songs) by fire He strikes terror. The flame is a mark at once of grace and of fear. If you be obedient it is a light—if disobedient, a consuming fire."

It may be asked—What is this fire? Firstly, Tertullian (Against Marcion, IV. xxix.), Maldonatus, and F. Lucas answer that it is hatred, dissensions, tribulations, and persecutions by unbelievers of

the faith and of the Apostles, and the faithful of Christ. These, indirectly, and occasionally, Christ and the Apostles raised by preaching the Gospel and the new religion of the crucified Saviour. "Christ," says Tertullian, "will better interpret the quality of this fire, ver. 51, 'Think you that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather division, for there shall be from henceforth,' &c. Christ means then the fire of destruction when He refuses peace: such as the conflict was, such will the burning be by which Christ will overthrow idolatry and all (manners of) wickedness, and will reduce them to ashes. Hence He would stir up all the nations that were addicted to their own idols against Himself and the Apostles, to extinguish by every means this new instrument of destruction of their ancient superstition. To this applies all that Christ subjoins in explanation of this fire, verses 50–53."

Secondly, and more fitly, S. Cyril in the *Catena*, and Jansenius think this fire to be the preaching of the Gospel, for Christ directly wished for this, that by its means He might warm the hearts of men by divine fire, as Ps. cxix. 140, "Thy Word is very pure" (Vulgate, ignitum).

Thirdly, and best, S. Ambrose and Origen on this passage, S. Athanasius on the Common Essence of Father and Son, S. Cyril (Book iv. on Leviticus), S. Jerome (Book ii. Apol. against Ruffinus), S. Augustine (*Serm.* 108 *de Tempore*), S. Gregory (*Hom.* 30 *in Evang.*), by "fire" understand the Holy Ghost and His gifts, especially charity, devotion, fervour, zeal, which, say Euthymius and Theophylact, "He kindles in the souls of the faithful." This fire also kindles the lamps of the faithful, according to the words, "Love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire which hath a most vehement flame." Cant. viii. 6. See what has been said thereon. The Church so explains it when on the Saturday after the Pentecost she prays thus in the Mass, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, may the Holy Spirit inflame us without fire which our Lord Jesus Christ sent upon earth and earnestly desired might be enkindled."

"By this fire," says S. Ambrose, "was Cleophas incited when he

said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He spake to us in the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" Luke xxiv. 32. Thus this fire of love and ardour embraces that of tribulation which has the first place. For this fire, the Apostles, inflamed with the love of Christ, overcame; and so provoked it, for it pressed upon them, as Christ foretold in the following, xii. 49. So said also S. Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am persuaded that neither death nor life," Rom. viii. 35–38. By the same fire was Ignatius urged in his Epistle to the Romans: "I wish," he said, "that I may enjoy the beasts that await me, which I pray may be swift for my destruction and my punishment, and may be allured to devour me. I am the wheat of Christ, to be ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may be found the bread of the world." This desire Christ fulfilled when He sent the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and faithful, in the form of tongues of fire at Pentecost, Acts ii. Upon which S. Chrysostom says (*Hom.* iv.): "This fire has burnt up the sins of the world like fire;" and again, as we may suppose: "As a man on fire (igneus homo) if he falls into the midst of stubble will not be hurt, but will rather exert his strength, so it happens here," that the Apostles as men on fire with the Spirit (homines ignei) should not be hurt by their persecutors, but rather convert them to the faith of Christ and inflame them. See the gifts of fire which I have counted up—enumerated and applied to the Love of God, Levit. ix. 23, and Acts xxiii. and ii. 3, and Dionysius on the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy xv., where he shows by many analogies that fire is the most apt symbol and hieroglyphic of God and the angels, and most fitly represents their similitude in imitating Him, according to the words of Deuteronomy iv. 24: "Thy God is a consuming fire;" and Heb. i. 7, "Who maketh His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire." With this fire burned Elijah, of whom it is written, "and Elias the prophet stood up as a fire, and his word burnt like a torch," Eccles. xlviii. 1, and therefore he was carried up into heaven in a chariot of fire; and Elisha cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Consumed by this fire the martyrs despised their lives,

nay, rather courted the flames, either because they did not feel them, like the three children in the furnace at Babylon, or that they overcame them by their heroic virtue, as did S. Laurence, of whom it is sung, Ps. xvii. 3, "Thou hast visited me in the night (Vulg.) with fire." Hard indeed and bitter was this test of fire, but the love of God conquered the pain; the torments of the Lamb overcame the torment of the fire; the memory of Christ, I mean, who suffered for us still more bitterly. "The fire of love could not be mastered by thy flames, O tyrant," said S. Leo in his sermon on S. Laurence. "The fire that burnt outwardly was more sluggish than that which burnt within. Thou ragedst, as a persecutor against the Martyr thou ragedst, and increased his palm whilst thou augmented his punishment;" and S. Augustine on Laurence: "The blessed Laurence was consumed by this fire, but he felt not the heat of the flames, and whilst he burnt with the love of Christ, he regarded not the punishment of the persecutor." So S. Ignatius, writing to the Romans, "Let fire," he says, "the breaking of my limbs by wild beasts, the dismembering of my body, the breaking to pieces of my whole frame, and all the torments of the devil come upon me, so only that I may have enjoyment of Christ." Of the same kind were also the Christians in the time of Tertullian, who (in 50 chap. *Apol.*) writes thus to the Gentiles: "Although you now call us Sarmentitii because we are burnt at the stake by a heap of faggots (sarmentorum), and Senarii because we are broken on the wheel, yet this is the garment of our victory, this our robe of glory, in this chariot we triumph." Are not these terrestrial seraphim more brave and ardent than the celestial? The latter abound with the fire of love only, the former with that of pain and martyrdom also, for they are living holocausts of God. In our own age, in the same fire, were and are consumed the Japanese, who were burnt to death in a slow fire for many hours, and remained in them unsubdued and unconquered like adamant, to death. Many of them were of our society, standard-bearers as it were of (the) faith; among them was R. P. Camillus Constantius of Italy, who remained for three hours in the fire immovable, nay, even joyful and exulting; (continually) crying out to God with a loud voice,

or animating his companions to constancy, or stirring up the people, a thing we have not hitherto read of in the lives of the Martyrs, until the flames seized on his inner organs, and deprived him at once of voice and life, that so he might die a glorious victim of a holocaust to God.

Hail, heroes of illustrious souls, champions of the faith, a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men. Burning with divine fire you resigned, for the faith of Christ, your bodies to the flames, and your souls to God; and from amidst those flames, rejoicing with the voice of swans, you covered yourselves with merits, amazed the tyrants, filled and adorned Japan with Christians, your society with heroic virtues, the world with fame, the Church with glory, the heavens with the laurels of fresh champions. For ever live your glory, your unconquered fortitude, your fire and ardour of heart, by which you will have illuminated and inflamed Japan, as long as the course of ages shall endure.

Thus thinking, S. Eulatia, burning with the desire of martyrdom, proceeded, without the knowledge of her parents, to her conflict, and, as Prudentius tells us in his hymn 3, when she was being consumed by the flames, she sang a hymn "On the Crowns:"—

Ergo tortor, adure,
Divide membra coacta luto
Solvere rem fragilem, facile est,
Non penetrabitur, interior,
Exagitante dolore, animus.

Come, thou tormentor, come and burn,
And cut, and wound, and slay,
Dissever thou these limbs of mine,
Joined but by feeble clay.

How easy 'tis, so frail a thing,
Entirely to destroy;
Tormenting pain can never touch
My inner spirit's joy.

And thus, in the thirteenth year of her age, surrounded by flames,

Virgo, citum cupiens obitum,
Appetit et bibit ore rogum.

For speedy death the Virgin wish'd,
And with a joyful smile
The bitter cup of death she drank,
Upon the funeral pile.

The martyr, in the form of a dove, flew up to heaven.

And what will I if it be already kindled? The Arabic has, "What will I but its kindling?" S. Jerome to Nepotian, "How I long for it to be kindled!" Origen (*Hom.* v. *on Ezekiel*), "I would it were kindled;" Philaster on the Heresies (*cap. ult.*), "How I wish that it were kindled;" that is, as the Syriac reads, "If now at length it were kindled." SS. Hilary on *Ps.* cxx., Theophylact, Euthymius, and Cyril in the *Catena*, "I wish nothing but that this fire were at length kindled; if it were, there is nothing else I desire, this is my one only prayer." Both readings amount to the same thing—"I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I if it is already kindled?"—that everywhere throughout the world He might kindle the earthly, lukewarm, frigid, nay, rocky, ice-cold, and rigid hearts of men, by His words and example, with the fierce heat of fervour, and turn them into the fire of love. So did our own S. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus. But to accomplish this there is need of much warmth and zeal. He, therefore, who would inspire others with this fire, must first kindle it strongly in himself.

Ardeat orator qui vult accendere plebem.

Wouldst thou enkindle others' hearts?
—then burn,
O Orator, thyself.

Ver. 50.—*But I have a baptism to be baptized with.* The Arabic says, "I have a baptism, and I shall be baptized with it:" That is, By the decree of God and of My own will and determination I owe (debeo) to be baptized.

And how am I straitened till it be accomplished! "This fire of love and zeal of the Holy Spirit, cannot break forth unless the flint of My body be first struck upon the cross, or rather, until I am baptized in the font of My own blood." This is like some fountains into which if we plunged a torch, by the wonderful power of nature, and an antiperistasis, it is lighted. Such, according to Pliny, is the fountain of Dodona (bk. ii. chap. 103). Our brethren of Coimbra, in Meteora (tract. ix. chap. 7), say that there is another in Epirus, and a third in India, the waters of which burn; another, again, which formerly took its name from Jupiter Ammon. This just before the dawn is tepid, at midday it becomes cold, it is warm

in the evening, and it boils at midnight. Similar springs are found near Naples, in France, and other places. Our Lord, then, compares His passion to these. This is like a boiling fountain which has aroused, and still arouses, the fire of love in the minds of the faithful. For equally by the merit of the cross and passion of Christ and by His example does this fire burst forth. He calls His death and passion a baptism, because He was clearly sunk and overwhelmed in it, as says the Psalm, "I sink in deep mire where there is no standing, I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me," lxix. 2.

And how am I straitened until it be accomplished? That is, "I am afflicted and tormented by the longing to die for the salvation of men and by My death to kindle this flame." Euthymius: "I am anxious because of its slowness;" and Theophylact: "How am I straitened," that is, how anxious and oppressed am I until it be performed, "for I thirst for death for the good of all men." So S. Ambrose, Bede, and others. The Arabic has, "I am narrowed for its performance." S. Irenæus I. 18 reads, "I earnestly hasten to it." For the hearts of the anxious are wont to be contracted and as it were compressed by such, whilst those of the joyful are expanded and dilated. De Lyra, therefore, renders it amiss, "I am narrowed," he says, "that is, I am filled with dread, according to the words, 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death.'" This, indeed, was a feeling natural to the soul of Christ, but He quelled and overcame it when He said, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Morally. Observe how great was the zeal of Christ, how great His love, how deep His thirst for our salvation. For it was this that raised in Him so great a thirst for His Passion, death, and crucifixion, cruel as they were; so that His heart, between their infliction and the waiting for them, was compressed, as between the two stones of a mill, and brought into the greatest straits; or placed, as it were, in a vice and compressed with anguish, lest what He loved should be refused or delayed. Christ then was urged and, as it were, burnt up by the utmost longing to offer Himself up to God as a holocaust on the altar of the cross, that, as far as in Him lay, He might sanctify, save, and bless all men.

This zeal, His thirst, He impressed upon the Apostles and apostolic men, who thirsted for crosses, labours, pains, torments, and martyrdoms, for the glory of God: that they might propagate the gospel of Christ throughout the whole world and save as many as they could. This is the holiness of the Gospel, this is the perfection of virtue, this is the crown of the Apostleship. S. Andrew's salutations of the cross, and his earnest longing for it, are known. "Hail, precious cross, long desired, and at last ready for my longing soul! Secure and rejoicing I come to thee; do thou with joy accept me, and through Thyself do Thou receive me who by dying for me hast redeemed me." S. Laurence said to the Emperor Valerian, when he showed to him with threats, flames, wheels, scorpions, wild beasts: "For this table I hunger, I thirst. There is no famished man who desires food, there is no one perishing of thirst who craves for water, as greedily as I court and covet all these torments, that I may repay to Christ my Saviour, pain for pain, death for death." S. Vicentius to Dacian: "No one living has conferred on me greater gifts than thou, who torturest and crucifiest me, for with as many tortures as thou afflictest me with—with so many crowns of martyrdom dost thou adorn me." And to the executioners, "How slow are ye, how slothful!"

S. Agatha to Quintianus, "Why are you so slow? What do you wait for?—scourge, lacerate, burn, cut down, mangle, slay my body, for the more you crucify me, the more good you confer upon me, and the more favour and grace shall I receive from my spouse Jesus Christ." Such were the vows and such the words of SS. Agnes, Lucia, Dorothea, Cœcilia, and other Martyrs.

Ver. 51.—*Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you nay, but rather division.* See what I have said Matt. x. 34.

Ver. 52.—*For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.* Five, that is—Father, son, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law, for mother-in-law is the same as mother. So S. Ambrose. And this is plain from what follows. In the same house three unbelievers shall rise against two believers, or two unbelieving against three faithful, or father and son, who do not

believe in Christ, shall rise against mother, daughter, and daughter in-law who do believe in Him, or the contrary.

Ver. 54.—*And He said to the multitudes also, When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass.* When you see a cloud from the west you say, It will rain. In the same manner Elijah, in the time of the three years' drought, when he heard from his servant that a cloud had arisen in the west, at once foretold that rain would follow, and it did so. 1. Kings xviii. 44. The cause of this is natural; for Judæa has the Mediterranean on the west, from which by the force of the sun many vapours are exhaled, which, when condensed into clouds by the heat of the sun, produce rain, especially when the sun is also in the west; for it is then too weak to disperse these vapours and prevent them from condensing into clouds and dissolving in rain. But the countries that have the sea equally on the west, the south and the north have, equally, from these quarters, clouds as forerunners of winds, as the English, who have the sea on all sides of them. See Matt. xvi. 3. It is necessary to human life, says S. Basil in the Catena, to watch the heavenly bodies, so that their warnings be not examined into beyond measure. It is of consequence to look out for, and guard against storms, and for the traveller to regard the changes of temperature, for the husbandman to consider the position of the sun and moon for his sowing that he may have an abundant harvest; for God has appointed these things for signs and for seasons.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. *Christ preacheth repentance upon the punishment of the Galileans, and others.* 6 *The fruitless fig tree may not stand.* 11 *He healeth the crooked woman:* 18 *showeth the powerful working of the word in the hearts of his chosen, by the parable of the grain of mustard seed, and of leaven:* 24 *exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate,* 31 *and reproveth Herod and Jerusalem.*

THERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6 ¶ He spake also this parable: A certain *man* had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard: and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung *it:*

9 And if it bear fruit, *well:* and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut it down.

10 ¶ And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself.*

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him,* and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou* hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath lose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

18 ¶ Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

19 It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

20 ¶ And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

23 ¶ Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25 When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know ye not whence ye are; depart from me, all *ye* workers of iniquity.

28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out.

29 And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

31 ¶ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.

33 Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not!

35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until *the time* come when ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 1.—*Whose blood Pilate mingled.* That is, whom while they were sacrificing in Mount Gerizim in Samaria, Pilate slew. He slew them that their blood might be mingled with the blood of their victims. Josephus relates the whole at length (*Antiq.*, book xviii.

chap. 7), as also does Hegesippus on the destruction of Jerusalem Josephus says, "A certain impostor incited the people to assemble on Mount Gerizim, a mountain which they held very sacred, by the promise of shewing them certain vessels which Moses had deposited there and he had dug up. They credulously took arms and occupied the village Tirathaba, awaiting the arrival of others that they might ascend the mountain in force. But Pilate seized it before them, and held it with cavalry and foot soldiers. These attacked the Samaritans in the village, killing some and putting the rest to flight. He also took many prisoners, the chief and most powerful of whom he put to death."

It may be said, "Josephus asserts them to have been Samaritans; how then does Christ call them Galileans?" The answer is, "They were called Samaritans from their country and nation, but Galileans from their sect and heresy." So says Baronius. To explain the matter, observe that Judas of Galilee, as St. Luke says, Acts v. 37, was the author of the sect of Galileans who rebelled against Cæsar, saying that it was not lawful for the Jews, who were a faithful people, and worshipped the true God, to be subject to Cæsar, a Gentile, and an idolater, and to give him tribute; for they ought to acknowledge and obey no other lord but God. So S. Cyril in the *Catena*, Theophylact, Euthymius, and Titus. Hence Pilate sent a force and destroyed them. This sect arose about the time of Christ. Hence Christ and the Apostles, being Galileans by nation, were accused of the same, and they therefore carefully taught in opposition that tribute ought to be given to kings and to Cæsar, even if Gentiles. Francis Lucas thinks that these Galileans were slain by Pilate in Jerusalem, when they were sacrificing in the Temple, because Pilate was Procurator of Judæa and not of Samaria. But Josephus plainly says that they were killed in Mount Gerizim, which is in Samaria. The Samaritans, moreover, were a schism from the Jews, and would not go into the Temple at Jerusalem, but built another in their own power on Mount Gerizim, as we find from S. John iv. 20. Pilate therefore attacked these Samaritans as rebels, and put them to death in Samaria, as open enemies to Cæsar.

When the slaughter of the Samaritans was frequently repeated, there were different opinions on the subject, many affirming that they were wicked men and hated by God; their sacrifices not only being rejected but also mixed with their blood. They related this to Christ and asked His opinion of the matter, but Christ made a wise use of this occasion, and drew from it an argument to rouse them to repentance, lest a similar vengeance should fall upon them. The preacher should follow this example, and when public slaughter, pest, famine, or wars befall, exhort his people to repentance, that they may escape such inflictions and, with them, the torments of Gehenna.

Ver. 2.—*And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye, &c.* They did suppose this, but wrongly, for God often corrects those who sin less heavily, to make them an example and a terror to others, and so incite them to penitence. So Bede, Titus, and others.

Ver. 3.—*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* "Likewise"—that is, by a similar death, none excepted, says Maldonatus; and so Wisdom vi. 8: "He hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike. For He cares for all without exception, though for some more and for others less." Secondly, and more simply, You shall equally perish, though by another kind of death, by an eternal instead of a temporal one, or even by a temporal. Thirdly, and properly, Jansenius says, "By a similar death; the destruction and vengeance of God." For the Jews were besieged by Titus at the time of the Passover, when they were sacrificing; and, when the city was taken, many were slain in the temple, where they were sacrificing, and accustomed to sacrifice. So Euthymius, S. Thomas, Hugo, N. de Lyra, S. Cyril in the *Catena.*

Observe that Christ here teaches us, in like calamities, to give our minds to the thought of our sins, and to repentance, that we fall not into the like punishments of God.

Symbolically, Bede says that Pilate means, the mouth of the hammerer, (os malleatoris) that is, the Devil, who is always ready to destroy. "Blood"—that is, sin and concupiscence. The sacrifices are good actions which the Devil, either for the delight of the flesh,

or from the ambition of human praise, or some other evil motive, pollutes.

Ver. 4.—*Or of those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell.* There was a fountain, or rather pool, near Jerusalem of which Isaiah speaks, "This people refuses the waters of Shiloah that go softly," viii. 6. Near this fountain was a tower also called Siloë, from it, which in the time of Christ fell down, either from the force of the wind, or from lightning, or an earthquake, or some other like cause, and destroyed eighteen persons who were either in it, or standing near. This, if we only regard secondary causes, may have happened by chance; but if we consider the one primary one, that is, God, it was done by His appointed Providence, who determines to punish some and to terrify others. For with God nothing is fortuitous, but everything is certainly foreseen and prepared, that nothing in His Kingdom should, as Boethius says, be ascribed to chance or temerity. God, then, orders these events for the chastisement and correction of man, that others, seeing their neighbours killed by the fall of a tower or some other sudden accident, may fear lest something similar happen to themselves, and so may repent and reconcile themselves to God, lest they be overwhelmed by His judgments and condemned to Gehenna. This is what God said by the prophet Amos, "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" iii. 6; and by Isaiah, "I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil" xlv. 7. The poets and philosophers saw the same through a shade:

—O qui res hominumque Deumque,
Æternis regis imperiis, et fulmine terres.

"O Thou who dost the affairs
Of men and gods, by laws eternal rule,
And by thy lightning fierce dost terrify."

And Plutarch (*In Moral.*), "As if a blind man should fall against a person, and call that person blind for not avoiding him, so we make Fortune blind, whereas we stumble against her from our own want of sight. For this very 'Fortuna fortunans,' which is, in truth, no other than God Himself, and the Providence of God is most keen of sight, and has many more eyes than Argus."

Symbolically. "The tower," says Bede, "is Christ, Siloë, that is, He who is sent by the Father into the world, and who crushes to powder all the wicked upon whom He falls, through the sentence of His condemnation."

Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? "Sinners"—the Arabic has culpabiles; the Chaldaic, charebim, *i.e.* debtors (for a debtor owes his soul, that is 10,000 talents, S. Matt. xviii. 24, to God). Christ shows clearly that these eighteen who were killed by the fall of the tower of Siloam, were sinners, though not, perhaps, the worst and greatest that were in Jerusalem.

Ver. 5.—*I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* "This shows," says S. Chrysostom, "that these eighteen were appointed as an example and terror to the others; though each was punished for his own sins. This was made wholesome matter for others, that the fool might be made wiser by the event. For God does not punish all here, but He leaves a time for repentance. Again, he does not leave all for a future punishment, lest many should deny His Providence."

Verses 6, 7.—*He spake also this parable.* "Cumbereth"—the Greek is καταργεῖ, that is, loads with a useless burthen, nay, renders the ground barren and fruitless, as well by its shade as by its roots, which keep the earth's moisture from the other trees. The Syriac says, "keeps it idle;" for ἄργον, is idle, inert, devoid of strength.

In the letter the fig-tree represents the synagogue of the Jews, which God planted through Moses; to which Christ came by the Incarnation, to cultivate it by His preaching. Christ, therefore, is the keeper of the vine, that is, of the synagogue, to whom God said, "Cut it down, for now for three years in which Thou hast preached to it, I have looked for the fruit of faith and good works, and I find none, from the unbelief, perverseness, and malice of the Jews." Christ intercedes for it, that the Father would allow Him to tend it by His preaching for one year more, or, at least, for half an one; and then, if it gave no fruit, it might be cut down. So it came to pass: for the Jews, in the fourth year of Christ's preaching, at the

Passover, adding sin to sin, and becoming more and more perverse, crucified Him; so that, a few years after, Titus was sent by God as His avenger, and took Jerusalem, and destroyed all Judæa. What remains are additions belonging to the finish of the parable, which it is unnecessary to apply to what is signified by it.

S. Ambrose observes, that the fig-tree is an apt symbol of the Synagogue: first, because it was a tree with abundance of leaves, but which disappointed its owner in his hope of fruit. Secondly, while the doctors of the Synagogue were fruitless of good works and boasted only of words like redundant leaves, the vain shadow of the law flourished exuberantly, but the false hope of the expected produce deceived the prayers of the people.

Secondly, as the fig puts out a green, that is an immature, fig (grossum) instead of blossoms, which soon falls, and then produces a savoury and solid fruit, so the Synagogue firstly put forth the Jews, like green and evanescent fruit, and then, through Christ, gave Christians, like mature and savoury figs. So Pliny, vii. 7, "Figs are produced late, if the green fruit, when exceeding the size of a bean, are taken away, for then are produced figs that ripen later."

Tropologically. The fig is any individual person, especially a believer; the gardener is Christ, the Apostles, and the like; the Lord is God the Father, or the Holy Trinity. Our own Salmeron (tom. vii., tract 21), gives various reasons and analogies, why the faithful are compared to a fig. 1. The fig produces sweet fruit, which seems to be purses of honey and sugar, and the righteous produce the like. 2. As the fig tree increases little in height but is always short, so the righteous cast themselves down, and humble themselves. 3. The fig, instead of blossoms, gives fruit, and that twice; namely, the early ripe in the summer, and in the autumn the later—for the fig bears twice a year, as the righteous is ever plentifully bringing forth the fruit of good works. 4. As the fig makes a shade with its ample leaves, so the righteous defends and protects others by his charity. 5. The fig is never grafted into another tree, because of its exceeding sweetness, which cannot leave it. So the righteous

rests in no man, but in God alone and his own conscience. 6. The fig tree, if stripped of its bark, gives no fruit, but withers away; and the righteous, unless protected by the bark of honest conversation, modesty, and outward decency, will bring no fruit with his neighbours. 7. The fig has medical properties, and heals diseases, as Isaiah healed Hezekiah by means of a fig (Isa. xxxviii. 21). Pliny also says that the fig alone, of trees, has medical virtues. So the righteous, because he is perfect and mature in virtue, ministers to the infirmities of others, by teaching, advising, and living holily. He adds that lopping and pruning it remedies its too great luxuriousness; as the righteous by circumcising and cutting off the desire of honour above, and the appetites of the senses below, by meditations on death and burial, is rendered fruitful in virtue and good works, and converts many of his neighbours to God.

Behold these three years I come seeking fruit. This alludes to the nature of the fig tree, which sometimes gives fruit in its third year. If not then, it commonly does not give it at all.

Symbolically, these three years, according to Euthymius, signify the three policies or political status of the Jews, under the Judges, Kings, and the High Priests, namely the Maccabees. St. Ambrose says "He came to Abraham, He came to Moses, He came to Mary; that is, He came in circumcision, He came in the Law, He came in the body. We acknowledge His Advent from His benefits to us. In the first, Purification; in the second, Sanctification; in the third, Justification—Circumcision purified, the Law sanctified, Grace justified—one in all, and all in one; no one can be cleansed but one who fears God: no one deserves to receive the Law but one who is purified from sin: no one comes to Grace but he who knows the Law." So also St. Cyril: "God sought the nature of the human race before the Law, under the Law, and under Grace by waiting, admonishing, visiting; but some are not corrected by the natural law, nor taught by precept, nor converted by miracle."

Tropologically, these three years, says Theophylact, are the three ages of man—childhood; full manhood; and old age. For every one ought at all times to bring forth the fruits of virtue to God, as

is fitting and proportionate to every age. God, who would have no age of man idle, requires these of every one.

And He, namely, the dresser of the Vine, Christ and the Apostles, *answering said unto him.* Christ and the Apostles, says the Interlineator, knowing that some of the Jews could be saved, pray God to delay the avenging of the Lord's cross, that is, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

And if it bear fruit. Understand, "It shall be well, it shall be safe, and it shall be saved." It is an aposiopesis. The Arabic adds, "For it has brought forth fruit." The Synagogue formerly gave fruit under Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and others.

And if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. As God cut down the Jews by the Romans.

Mystically, S. Augustine (*De Verb. Dom.*) says: "He who intercedes is all holy; who, within the Church, prays for those who are without." To dig about the conscience is to teach humility and patience, and to engraft on the mind the consideration of heaven and heavenly things, lest, as S. Ambrose says, the heap overwhelm the root of earthly wisdom and of earthly desires and hide it from view.

And dung it. This is, as S. Ambrose says, the feeling of humility, and S. Augustine (*De Verb. Dom.*): "Dung is filth, but it causes fruitfulness. The filth of the vine-dresser is the grief of the sinner." And S. Gregory, "Dung is the sins of the flesh, from which the mind is roused to good works."

Ver. 10.—*And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.* The Sabbath was a festival on which the Jews came to the synagogue to hear the Law and its interpretation, as Christians on the Lord's day come together to hear mass and the sermon. Christ chose this time and place for the following miracle, that it might be public, and that He might confute and instruct the Pharisees, when speaking against it on account of the Sabbath.

Ver. 11.—*And behold there was a woman.* "The spirit of infirmity, that is, an infirmity sent by the evil one," says de Lyra. Euthymius, "The devil of weakness not suffering her to live." The

Arabic reads, "With whom was a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and she was bowed together and was not able to stand up by any means." This infirmity was a curving and bending of the whole body, so that the woman was compelled always to walk bent and stooping. Observe that diseases are often sent by the devils, through the permission of God, for sins or other reasons. Ver. 16 shows the cause of this infirmity, "This daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound." Thus the devil afflicted Job with various diseases, chap. ii. The same is seen in Ps. lxxviii. 49, and Matt. ix. 23. The devil, therefore, made this woman crooked and bent, to compel her always to look down upon the earth.

Eighteen years. It was, therefore, an inveterate and incurable disease, and as such could not be healed by the physicians.

And was bowed together. Looking towards the ground, (cernua) crooked, with her head and back bent downwards—nay, she was less able even than a beast to look up at the sun and heavens, but must always look down at the rocks and the earth. For at the creation (Gen. i.)

Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus,—

"God gave to man a lofty countenance,
And to regard the heavens commanded him,
Bade him to lift his form erect, and gaze
Upon the starry host,"—

that he might look up at the sun and the heavens, and, by a heavenly life, journey towards God on high, and be received into heaven and there enjoy the blessedness of the divine vision; for, as S. Basil says in the *Catena*, "We should seek heavenly things, and rise above those of earth." The devil, then, to turn men from heaven, makes them look downwards, so that they see, love, and pursue only earthly things.

Ver. 12.—*And when Jesus saw her* (the Arabic has "Jesus looked upon her;" with the eyes, that is, of both body and mind; with the eyes of grace, pity, and mercy), *He called her to Him, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed*, &c. "Loosed," that is, thou shalt be dismissed; thou art healed; healed by Me, through the laying on

of My hands, as followed. For Christ seems to have done two things at the same time: to have laid His hands upon her, and so healed her, and to have said, Thou art loosed. He said, "Thou art loosed," and not "I loose thee," to sharpen the woman's faith. For Christ often ascribes healing and salvation to His touch, to show the virtue of His word and contact, for in the same moment in which He touched this woman, He healed her. "There was a divine virtue," says S. Cyril in the *Catena*, "in the flesh of Christ, by which in an instant He worked great and wonderful miracles. As when He said 'This is My Body,' He transmuted the bread into His Body, as He transubstantiates it daily in the Mass. For, to have said, This is My body, is to have made it so; as in the words, 'He spake and it was done.'" Hence, Titus, "By a word, assuredly most divine, and by a most perfect heavenly power, He removed the infirmity of this woman." Lastly, the words "Thou art loosed," that is, thou art freed, shows that the woman had been bound by Satan, constrained, kept down, as by a chain, so that her head appeared fixed to her knees and thighs. This bond Christ loosed, and thus made her erect. For Christ came to destroy the works of the devil.

Ver. 13.—*And He laid His hands on her.* The hands signify the power of Christ, His authority, rule over diseases and devils; and equally His loving-kindness and beneficence, by which He conferred the benefit of healing upon the woman, through the beneficence of His touch.

Ver. 14.—*And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation.* With indignation, because he envied Jesus the glory of a miracle by which He had shown Himself, before the whole synagogue and people, to be greater than the ruler. This man made religion and zeal for the observation of the Sabbath the cloak of his feeling. He is therefore called a hypocrite by Christ. So S. Cyril in the *Catena*. "When the ruler of this ungrateful synagogue saw the woman made suddenly erect by a mere touch, and celebrating the great acts of God, he sullied his zeal for the glory of the Lord with envy, and censured the miracle as if he would

show himself solicitous for the Sabbath." Observe the word "ungrateful." He ought to have been grateful to Christ and to have given Him thanks for having honoured himself and the synagogue, and distinguished it by this miracle. But envy had so blinded him, that he thought the glory of Christ his own dishonour and disgrace, for he was unable to perform such and so great acts, himself. So Saul ought to have given thanks to David for slaying Goliath, the dread of himself and of all Israel. But envy made him so perverse that he thought the glory of David his own ignominy, imagining that David was preferred to himself, and that he himself, though the king, was placed below him. This is the living image of envy—the mask of religion—veiled and cloaked.

Ver. 15.—*The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite.* Hypocrites who feign sanctity abroad, when within they are full of envy and malice. S. Chrysostom in the *Catena:* "Christ rightly called him a hypocrite, because he had the face of one who observed the law carefully, but the mind of cunning and envy. He was not disturbed for the Sabbath and its violation, but because of Christ, because He obtained glory." I have treated the subject at length, *Ecclus.* i. 37, on the words *ne fueris*, and ii. 14, *Væ duplici.*

This daughter of Abraham. The argument of Christ is most applicable and forcible, showing that the healing was not a servile act, but one liberal and divine, and therefore, not only not unworthy, but rather most worthy, of the Sabbath—for the Sabbath, nay, even God Himself, the author of it, was wonderfully sanctified and made glorious, as S. Irenæus shows when he says that, "Christ, in healing the sick on the Sabbath day, acted not contrarily but according to the law." Christ then compares, opposes, and prefers the bond and release of the woman to the bond and release of the ox and ass.

Again, every word contains a pregnant antithesis. In the first Christ compares, and prefers the woman, as a daughter of Abraham, to the ox or ass. 2. He compares and prefers the spiritual bond and deliverance of the woman to those of the ox and ass. 3. The woman had suffered this bondage for eighteen years. The ox had

borne its tether, and therefore its thirst, only an hour or two. 4. The setting of the ox free was a long and troublesome work, but the healing of the woman was the act of a moment, in which the obligation of the Sabbath could in no way be violated. 5. By this release the woman was restored to perfect health and sanctity, but the ox only drank a little draught of water. Lastly, He convicts the ruler and the Pharisees of inhumanity, because, in the words of Bede, "he postponed the healing of a human being to care of cattle."

The glorious things that were done by Him. The Syraic—In all the miracles which were done by His hand.

Ver. 18.—*Then said He.* The word "then" is illative, as is shown by what precedes and follows. Christ saw that He had silenced His enemies, the Pharisees, by His wisdom, and that the people rejoiced and praised both Himself and His word. When He saw them thus rightly disposed, He proposed to them the parable of the kingdom of heaven; for He saw that the way was now prepared for proclaiming this, and for His preaching—that He might incite all to attempt its attainment, and therefore to receive His evangelical doctrine and life. I have explained the parable on S. Matt. xiii. 31.

Ver. 23.—*Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved?* Christ answered in the affirmative that few should be saved, as S. Luke signifies and S. Matt. plainly states, vii. 14. Isaiah speaks to the same effect, x. 22; xxiv. 13. Understand "few" by a comparison of all the inhabitants of the whole world; or of the faithful with the unbelieving, for all the latter are condemned for their unbelief, and equally many of the faithful for their wicked lives. The faithful alone are saved, and not all of these. But whether the greater number of them are saved or lost is the question. Some think that the greater number are saved, through the holy sacraments (which very many of them only receive at the end of their lives). Others think that most are lost because they live in a state of mortal sin. The rule of S. Augustine is that as men have lived, so they die. Of these opinions I have shown which is the true one, on S. James ii. 13, on the words "Mercy rejoiceth against judg-

ment." The judgment of S. Chrysostom, Homily xl. to the Antiochenes, who numbered 100,000 or more, is formidable. "In our city," he says, "among so many thousands, scarcely can 100 be found who will be saved, for in the youngers is great wickedness, and in the elders deadness." And S. Augustine (Bk. iv. ch. 53, against Dresconius) compares the Church to a threshing-floor, on which there is much more chaff than grain, *i.e.* more reprobate than elect.

Ver 31.—*The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying, Herod will kill Thee,* as he slew John Thy forerunner. Christ seems not to have preached in Galilee at this time, as He had previously left it (Matt. xix.), but in Peræa in Judæa, for Herod ruled over Peræa as well as Galilee. So thinks F. Lucas. Maldonatus and others, however, suppose that these things were done in Galilee, that S. Luke may now insert by recapitulation what had been done there previously, as we find in ver. 24 and chap. ix. 51.

Moreover the Pharisees, by this falsehood, pretended that Herod was hostile to Christ, that they might banish Him from among them, or at least that they might test His freedom and conscience and depress Him by implanting in his mind the fear of Herod, and might thus drive Him out of their country. "Lest," says Euthymius, "by His presence and miracles He might gain fame and attract a multitude." And perhaps, when going from Peræa to Judæa, He might fall into the hands of the chief Priests, whom they knew to be contriving His death, as is plain from S. John vii. 20. 25. Herod, indeed, was not opposed to Christ, for he desired to see Him and His miracles, as in chap. ix. 9; nay, he would not condemn Christ when Christ was sent to him by Pilate, but sent Him back to Pilate clad in a white (alba, Vulg., λάμπρος, Greek) robe, as if He were worthy of ridicule and not death, chap. xxiii. So Jansenius, Maldonatus, F. Lucas and others.

Ver. 32.—*And He said to them.* Christ answered the Pharisees freely and loftily when they brought up the fear of Herod. He said that He feared neither Herod, nor the Pharisees, nor the rulers, but He would continue to preach, though against the will of them all, until the day appointed by the Father for His death. He called Herod

"a fox," because he was cunning, crafty, (versipellis) and false, for he killed John the Baptist by fraud and falsehood. Such are heretics the type of whom was Herod, for they seek to kill those who believe, in Christ.

But Christ here rather addresses the Pharisees, and calls them all foxes because they would have instilled a false fear of Herod into His mind, that in flying from Judæa He might be taken by the rulers and put to death. Titus says that "He appears, as some think, to direct the whole force of His words against Herod alone, but He turns them against the wickedness of the Pharisees rather than Herod, for He did not say 'that fox,' but 'this fox.'" In fact, to show that the Pharisees resembled foxes by their pretended fraud, He carefully used a middle term, and, as S. Theophylact says, "with intention," for by saying "fox" in the singular He made them think that He meant Herod, but by the addition of the demonstrative pronoun "this," He signified that they themselves were the crafty ones.

Thus Emmanuel Sà: "The word 'that' may apply either to Herod or to him who invented the falsehood that Herod wished to kill Christ; and who must have been one of the Pharisees, the enemies of Christ. The meaning then is, You Pharisees, like crafty and deceitful foxes, would fill Me with the fear of Herod, that I may no longer preach among you; but I forewarn you that I fear neither you nor Herod, nor will I, for any reason, cease to preach; for I am sure that my Father will not suffer Me to be taken and put to death before the day appointed by Him shall have arrived."

Behold, I cast out devils—I proceed to perform my work against the will not only of Herod but of you—*to-day and to-morrow*, that is, for some time yet, *and the third day*, that is, in a short time, when I shall have finished my ministry and preaching, *I shall be perfected*, *i.e.* "I shall receive my consummation in a glorious death on the cross, undergone by me willingly and courageously for the salvation of men," as the Apostle says, Hebrews xi.

Observe the Hebraism by which an indefinite time is put for a definite, as in Hosea vi. 2. So S. Cyril and Theophylact. Euthymius

says, "To-day; and therefore to-morrow; that is, for some time yet, though a short one, that is about three months," for Christ appears to have said this a little before the Feast of Dedication, which is kept upon the 25th of the month Casleu, which answers to part of our November and December, and He was crucified in the following March.

Christ therefore boldly said this to the Pharisees to show, 1. That He feared not death but sought it. 2. To show His Divine Power, by which He would live among men, and teach them, even against their will, as long as the Father and Himself pleased and determined. 3. To increase the vexation of the perverse Pharisees, for they already wished for His destruction.

Christ also calls His death "a consummation," because in it and by it He consummated the whole œconomy of His Incarnation, and the whole work of the mission on which He was sent by the Father, that is, the expiation of all sins, the redemption of the human race, the salvation of the elect; as in Hebrews x. 14.

Ver. 33.—*Nevertheless I must walk.*' 'Must," says S. Bonaventure, "not from compulsion but from Divine decree." So S. Cyril, and Titus. Christ repeats this (which He had said in the preceding verse) to show that He was constant in fearing neither Herod nor the Pharisees, and in His determination to preach, against their will, for a short time still, to the day appointed by the Father. The meaning is: "To-day and to-morrow, and the third day following I must walk in the towns and villages, and preach, and on that third day following, that is soon after, be perfected by death on the cross, as I have already said. I now add that on the third day I shall do the same, for although I shall be perfected on this day, yet on this day also I must walk. All the time of my life, even to my death, I must walk in this country, and preach, and work cures, and cast out devils, because I have consecrated my whole life to holy actions, and my death to generous suffering; for I have offered myself to God as a holocaust." In Hebrew "to walk" is taken for "to work;" S. John viii. 12., xii. 35; Ps. i. 1, and elsewhere. The Syriac has, "I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and on the third day I shall

make my journey," *i.e.* I shall set out to Jerusalem to my death, and thence to Heaven from which I came.

Morally, the faithful, and especially the apostolic man, may learn to labour strenuously in the Lord's vineyard even to death and martyrdom, like SS. Peter, Paul, Chrysostom, Athanasius and others. So our own Father Canisius, though worn out by many and great labours, yet ceased not from them until his seventy-seventh year, when he was released at once from them and from his life.

These were his words. "To the soldiers of Christ," their term of service (*stipendia*) is not finished till the end of their lives. When they have ended then they begin: death alone gives them their discharge. There is one abode for those who have merited it, heaven. So our own Sacchinus in Bk. iii. of his life: "Let us labour therefore even to death, that after death we may rest for ever in a blessed felicity; for earth is the course (stadium) of a little labour, heaven is the seat of eternal repose."

For it cannot be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem. In the Greek οὐκ ἐνδέχεται; that is, it is not fitting, it does not happen. "It cannot be done" is read by the Syriac. It is a hyperbole. It means, "Such is the wickedness and barbarity of Jerusalem, that it seems proper to her that the prophets should be killed by herself, nay, she will not suffer this to be done by any other, but takes it amiss if it be. I do not fear Herod therefore, whom you cast up to Me, because I shall not be put to death by him now in Galilee, but some months hence in Jerusalem, the murderess of the prophets, where, not by Herod, but by yourselves, O Pharisees, I shall be crucified and slain." "For they were accustomed," says S. Theophylact, "to pour out the blood of the servants, even as they poured out that of the Lord Himself." So Titus, Jansenius, Maldonatus, and F. Lucas. The last named says: "It cannot be that a prophet should be slain outside Jerusalem, he must be slain within it; not because none were slain outside, for Jezebel slew many in Samaria, 1. Kings xviii. 13, xix. 10, but as it was most usual for their slaughter to take place within the walls. For the kings had their abode there, and the rulers, the nobles, the scribes, the wise men, and the

Pharisees, holy in their own eyes, who, like the people, would not endure the rebukes and admonitions of the prophets; so that the city was changed from the house of God, into the slaughter-house of the prophets, and professed to be, as it were, their place of torture. We read, 2 Kings xxi. 16, "Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another."

In like manner at Rome, in various places, and especially at the Ursus Pileatus, where is now the Church of S. Bibiana, a great number of Christians were slain by the unbelieving Emperors: so that the place obtained the vulgar name of "The Shambles of the Martyrs." Thus it might then have been said with truth, "It is not possible that a Pope should be killed out of Rome, for almost all the Popes, from S. Peter to Silvester, for 300 years, were put to death by the Emperors at Rome for the faith of Christ."

CHAPTER XIV.

2 *Christ healeth the dropsy on the sabbath:* 7 *teacheth humility:* 12 *to feast the poor:* 15 *under the parable of the great supper, sheweth how worldly minded men, who contemn the word of God, shall be shut out of heaven:* 25 *those who will be his disciples, to bear their cross must make their accounts aforehand, lest with shame they revolt from him afterwards,* 34 *and become altogether unprofitable, like salt that hath lost his savour.*

AND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

4 And they held their peace. And he took *him*, and healed him, and let him go;

5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

7 ¶ And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any *man* to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 ¶ Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

15 ¶ And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed *is* he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

25 ¶ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

34 ¶ Salt *is* good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Ver. 1.—*And it came to pass that He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees.* "To do them service," says Titus, "Christ makes Himself their friend, and, as it were, one of their household," for "although He knew the malice of the Pharisees, yet He became their guest that He might benefit by His words and miracles those

who were present, and teach them the lawfulness of healing on the Sabbath, and the respective duties of entertainers and guests."

Ver. 2.—*And behold there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy.* This man seems to have been a friend of the Pharisee, who perhaps had invited Jesus in order that He might heal him. Certainly, as S. Cyril and Euthymius say, the sufferer presented himself of his own accord to Jesus, silently pleading that he might be restored to health. But the Pharisees sought His presence for another purpose, in order that they might see whether Christ would heal him on the Sabbath day, and thus show that He was not in truth a prophet sent by that God who had sanctified the rigid observance of the seventh day.

Ver. 3. *And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees.* Answering their thoughts and not their inquiry, for they had asked no question, but thought in their hearts that Christ would be acting unlawfully if He healed on the Sabbath day.

Ver. 4.—*And He took him, and healed him, and let him go* (ἐπιλαβόμενος, "when He had touched him," apprehensum, Vulg.) He heals by His touch the dropsical man who, from fear of the Pharisees, did not ask to be healed on account of the Sabbath, but only stood up, that when Jesus beheld him He might have compassion on him and heal him. S. Cyril.

Mystically. S. Gregory (*lib.* xiv. *Moral.*) observes: "The sick of the dropsy is healed in the Pharisee's presence, for by the bodily infirmity of the one is expressed the mental disease, *i.e.* the avarice and covetousness, of the other." "For," says Bede, "the dropsical man represents one who is weighed down by an overflowing stream of carnal pleasures." S. Augustine adds, "We lightly compare one sick of the dropsy to a covetous rich man, who, the more he abounds in riches, the more ardently desires them. Avarice and covetousness, then, are very similar to the dropsy, and as this dire disease is best remedied by abstaining from drinking, so the remedy for unlawful desire is mortification, abstinence, and continence, all of which wither and drive out virtuous habits."

Ver. 5.—*And He answered them, saying, Which of you,* &c. "If," says Bede, "ye hasten on the Sabbath to pull an ox or an ass out

of the pit into which he has fallen, consulting not the good of the animal, but your own avarice, how much more ought I to deliver a man who is much better than a beast?" He adds also, "they were not to violate the Sabbath by a work of coveteousness, who were arguing that He did so by a work of charity." And again, in a mystical sense, the ox and the ass represent the wise and the foolish, or the Jew oppressed by the burden of the Law and the Gentile not subject to reason. For the Lord rescues from the pit of concupiscence all who are sunk therein."

S. Augustine also (*Lib.* ii. *Quæst. Evang.*) says, "He has aptly compared the dropsical man to an animal which has fallen into a ditch (for he is troubled by water), as He compared that woman whom He loosed, to a beast which is let loose to be led to water."

6. *And they could not answer Him again to these things.* Because they were convinced by the truth of His reasoning. Yet privately they murmured amongst themselves, and afterwards openly clamoured amongst the people. "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day," S. John ix. 16. Although Jesus knew this, He healed the man, and permitted their malice and obstinacy to gather force, so that the cross ordained for Him by God might be prepared for the salvation of men. "Caring nought," says Theophylact, "for the offence given to the Pharisees." For when a great good is the result, we must not care if the foolish are offended.

Ver. 7. *And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, i.e.* He taught, under the similitude of a man seeking the highest place at a feast, that we must beware of every kind of ambition. For sin continues to be sin, although the manner of sinning be changed.

"*When He marked how they chose out the chief rooms.*" For as teachers of the Law, they considered themselves entitled to the highest honour, and fought for precedence as eagerly as now-a-days ladies of rank and men of small brains.

This is a kind of introduction to the parable, and indicates the occasion on which it was spoken, and the persons against whom it was directed.

Ver. 8.—*When thou art bidden . . . sit not down in the highest room.* For when the master of the house takes your place from you to give it to a more honourable guest, those who sit next in order will not give way to your ambition, and you will begin with shame to go down from the highest to the lowest room. Do not unduly exalt thyself, lest some one, offended by thy insolence, humble it and lay it low.

Ver. 10.—*Go and sit down in the lowest room.* The master of the house usually assigned to each guest his place at the table, a duty formerly discharged by the "ruler of the feast," regard being had to each one's age and social standing. Thus Joseph's brethren "sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth" Gen. xliii. 33. In this verse, Christ makes evident allusion to the saying of Solomon, "Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king," &c. (Prov. xxv. 6, 7). Titus very justly remarks, that "a wise man, however deserving he may be of the highest place, so little affects it, as to give it up to others of his own accord. Wherefore a mind modest and content with its own lot is a great and a glorious gift."

Then shalt thou have worship. Christ teaches that if we would acquire glory and greatness, we must fly from them and be humble; for men hate the proud and seek to humiliate them, but make much of the modest and meek; the true glory is that which is given, not that which is sought: furthermore, God has decreed by an eternal law that the humble should be exalted, but that the mighty should be put down from their seat. Wherefore, the proud, if they are wise, will humble themselves, that they may have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with them. Knowing that if they seek the most honourable places, they will excite envy, and men will strive, whether rightly or wrongly, to humiliate them.

Hear what the wise man says, "The greater thou art, the more humble thyself, and thou shalt find favour before the Lord." (Ecclus. iii. 20.)

This precept of Christ, or rather this wise dogma, was recognised and taught by the Gentile philosophers. So Plutarch introduces Thales thus sharply rebuking the pride of Alexidemus, who,

because he was the son of Thrasybulus had rushed from the banqueting hall at seeing others seated above him: "Fearest thou lest thy place at table shall bring thee glory or obscurity after the manner of the stars, which, as the Egyptians say, wax and wane according to the places wherein they rise or set? Thou art not so wise as the man, who, when the leader assigned him the lowest place in a chorus, said, Thou hast done well in having discovered a means of making even a position such as this honourable. For he was of opinion that a man is not distinguished by his position, but rather the position by the man."

Honour, like the shadow cast by the body, follows him that flie from it, but flees from him that follows it.

Symbolically. Members of religious orders, according to the words of Christ, "sit down in the lowest room." For they who have kept nothing, but given up all, even their very will, have no lower place to which they can betake themselves. Here they are at rest, for their humility is not limited, like that of other men, to this or that action, but is life-long; for it is a part of their profession which embraces their whole life.

Ver. 11.—*For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased*, &c., both by God and man, often in this life, always in the life to come. This verse explains the meaning and scope of the parable. See S. Matt. xxiii. 12.

Ver. 12.—*Then said He also unto him that bade Him, i.e.* to the chief Pharisee mentioned in the first verse, whose hospitality Christ recompensed by the spiritual banquet of ghostly counsel and advice. This man, says the Gloss, seems to have invited his guests in order that he in turn might be entertained by them.

"*Call not thy friends.*" Christ counselled this as the more perfect way. He did not command it as of necessity. For it is lawful, nay, meritorious, for us to invite our friends, if it be done out of friendship and kindness. Whence Bede says, "Brethren then, and friends, and the rich are not forbidden, as though it were a crime, to entertain one another, but this, like all the other necessary intercourse among men, is shown to fail in meriting the reward of ever

lasting life," unless, as I have said, such entertainment springs from a higher motive of brotherly love or charity.

"*Lest they also bid thee again.*" Like worldly men are wont to do from gratitude or else avarice, for "to be hospitable to those who will make a return, is," says S. Ambrose, "but a form of avarice."

"*And a recompence be made thee*" by man, and this prove worthless and transient. If you regard this alone, you exclude the spiritual recompence from God and deprive yourself of it; if you look for both you will receive both, but both lessened, for the one lessens and as it were interferes with the other; but if you regard the divine alone, and only admit or rather bear with the human recompence because it is offered you, you will receive the divine whole and undiminished.

Ver. 13.—*But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.* "The maimed," ἀναπήρους, the cripple, the mutilated, *i.e.* those wanting in body or mind. S. Chrysostom assigns the reason. "If ye invite the poor, God will be your debtor. For the humbler the brother is, so much the more does Christ come through him and visit us. For he who entertains a great man does it often from an interested motive or from vainglory. But thou sayest, the poor man is unclean and filthy. Wash him and make him sit with thee at table. If he has dirty garments, give him clean ones. If thou will not receive him in a quiet chamber, at least admit him where thy servants are. If thou art not willing that he should sit at meat with thee, send him a dish from thy table."

Following this counsel, S. Gregory had often twelve beggars at his table, and therefore was rewarded by receiving Christ Himself in the guise of a poor man. S. Louis of France also, not content with entertaining 120 beggars at his table daily, and on feast days 200, frequently waited upon them himself, and even washed their feet. In like manner acted S. Louis the Minorite, Bishop of Toulouse, following the example of his uncle S. Louis; S. Hedwig, Duchess of Poland, and her niece S. Elizabeth, the daughter of Andrew king of Hungary, who fed 900 poor every day, receiving a rich reward in divine favour and grace.

Mystically. Origen says, "He who shuns vainglory, calls to a spiritual banquet the poor, that is, the ignorant, that he may enrich them; the weak, that is, those with offended consciences, that he may heal them; the lame, that is, those who have wandered from reason, that he may make their paths straight; the blind, that they may discern the truth."

Ver. 14.—*And thou shalt be blessed*, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, when, says the Interlinear, the entertainers of the poor will enter into blessedness.

The neediness of the guests purifies the intention of the host, who expects no return from them, but acts solely out of love to God. Wherefore God, who considers that what is done to the poor is done unto Him, will grant him a bounteous reward, even the everlasting delights of the heavenly banquet, according to the promise, "and I appoint unto you . . . that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." S. Luke xxii. 29. Hence S. Chrysostom says, "Let us be troubled not when we receive no return of a kindness, but when we do; for if we have received it, we shall receive nothing more; but if man does not repay us, God, out of love for whom we have acted, will be our recompense."

Ver. 15. *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God; i.e.*, in the resurrection of the just, of which Christ had made mention in the preceding verse. S. Cyril in the *Catena*, says, "This man was carnal, for he thought the reward of the saints was to be bodily." He must therefore have been one of the Pharisees, for they believe in the resurrection, which the Sadducees deny. Acts xxiii. 8. For in heaven God feeds, satisfies, and fills (inebriat) the blessed with all delights. So the Psalmist: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness. Ps. xvii. 15. And again, "They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of Thy house, and Thou shalt give them drink of Thy pleasures as out of the river." Ps. xxxvi. 8. This joy S. Augustine describes at length in his Soliloquies and Meditations.

Mystically. "He was sighing for something which was afar off, and the bread itself was lying before him. For who is that Bread of the kingdom of God but He who says, I am the living bread which came down from heaven." S. John vi. 51.

Ver. 16. *Then He said unto him, A certain man made a great supper.* This parable is very similar to that recorded by S. Matthew. See commentary on S. Matt. xxii. 2.

But you will ask, What was this supper? 1. Some understand by it, the incarnation of the Word of God, the preaching of His Gospel, and the redemption wrought by Him. For this is the great supper to which Christ, when He became incarnate, invited us. S. Matthew calls it a dinner. It is a dinner as regards the Church Militant; a supper with respect to the Church Triumphant. In this sense Leonidas addressed his comrades before the battle: "Let us dine, fellow-soldiers, for we shall sup in the nether (or rather the upper) world." For the Church Militant here on earth is striving eagerly to attain the Church Triumphant in Heaven.

2. S. Cyril, in the *Catena*, understands the Eucharist by the supper. "The man," he says, "is God the Father, who has prepared for us a great supper in Christ, for He has given us His own body to eat. Whence the Church makes choice of this parable for the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament."

3. But in its literal sense, the supper is the happiness and glory of heaven. It is called a supper, because it will be given in the evening, *i.e.* at the end of the world, when life and its troubles are over: because, also, it will be our only and everlasting refreshment.

The great supper, says S. Gregory (*Hom.* 36), is the full enjoyment of eternal sweetness; for after it no guest is cast out.

A great. For nothing greater than it can be imagined, since God Himself will be our food and feast. Hence, Euthymius says, "Hereby is signified the unspeakable fruition of God, who will fulfil the utmost expectations of the blessed. For 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'" 1 Cor. ii. 9.

And bade many: e.g., the whole nation of the Jews, who were the Church and the chosen people of God, and specially their rulers, who were bidden to "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." S. Matt. iii. 2.

Ver. 17.—*And sent his servants*, &c., *i.e.*, sent the Apostles after

the resurrection to say that all things were ready for the heavenly feast.

Ver. 18.—*And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground*, &c. The Scribes and Pharisees, and the chief Priests are here clearly indicated; for they, invited by Christ to the Gospel feast, made light of it, because they were so intent on their farms, *i.e.* their worldly possessions, that they had neither time nor inclination to think about the salvation of their souls. "God," says S. Gregory (*Hom.* 36 *in Evang.*), "offers what ought to have been asked. Unasked, He is ready to give, what we could scarcely dare hope for. He announces that the delights of the eternal feast are ready, and with one consent they make excuse." "They say, I pray thee, and then disdain to come. The word sounds of humility, but the action is pride." S. Bernard rightly calls men who seek wealth, pleasure, honour and the like, lunatics. "I once" says he, "saw five men: why should I not look on them as lunatics? For the first, with swollen cheeks, was chewing the sand of the sea-shore. The second, standing by a lake of sulphur, was endeavouring to inhale the foul and noxious vapour which arose therefrom. The third, leaning over a blazing furnace, was enjoying the burning sparks which he received within his gaping jaws. The fourth, seated on a pinnacle of a temple, was drawing in with open mouth the light breezes, and if they seemed to flow less freely he fanned himself, as if in hope of inhaling the whole atmosphere. The fifth, standing aside, was laughing at the others, although himself the most deserving of ridicule, for he was busily engaged in sucking his own flesh, applying now his hands, now his arms, now one part of his body, now another to his mouth." By these figures S. Bernard pictures the various kinds of sin. The first represents the greedy, the second the lustful, the third those prone to anger, the fourth the ambitious, and the fifth those who boast themselves over much of their possessions and are self-satisfied, who are never content, but ever thirsting for the good things of this world.

Ver. 19.—*And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I*

go to prove them, &c. Another kind of avarice is here described, viz, the desire of possessing oxen, and animals for tillage, or food, or some other purpose; for the riches of the patriarchs lay in their herds. So think Theophylact and Titus. S. Gregory, however (*Hom.* 36), says, "What are we to understand by the five yoke of oxen but the five senses? which are rightly called yokes, because they are double in the two sexes."

Ver. 20.—*And another said, I have married a wife*, &c. What, asks S. Gregory, are we to understand by a wife but carnal gratifications? The Pharisees, like many at the present time, were ensnared by avarice and luxury. These are the thorns which choke the word of God. S. Luke viii. 14.

Let us all then give heed to the warning of S. Paul, and remember that "the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor vii. 31). "For the 'res temporalis' consists in possession, and 'res eterna' in expectation," S. Gregory (*Hom.* 36). Not that marriage is censured here (save so far as it interferes with the work of salvation), says S. Ambrose, but purity is held up to greater honour, for "the love of the things of this world is a fetter to (viscus est) the wings of the spirit." Gloss.

In carnal things, desire begets satiety, and satiety disgust; but in spiritual things, satiety provokes desire. S. Gregory.

S. Augustine (*serm.* 33, *De Verb. Domini*) explains and applies somewhat differently the excuses of the invited guests:

"The piece of ground which was bought denotes government. Therefore pride is the first vice reproved.

"The five yoke of oxen are taken to be the five senses, by means of which earthly things are pursued. For the oxen till the ground; but men at a distance from faith, given up to earthly things, are occupied with carnal matters.

"'Love not the world, therefore, neither the things that are in the world,' for 'the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.' 1 S. John ii. 15, 17. Away then with wicked and vain excuses, and let us come to the supper wherewith we may be inwardly nourished. Let not the lifting up of pride hinder us, neither let lawless curiosity fright us, and turn us away from God. Let not the pleasures of the

flesh keep us from the pleasure of the heart. Let us come and be filled."

Ver. 21.—*So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things*, &c. We are here taught that Christ chose the outcasts and poor in place of the Priests and Pharisees who had made light of His gospel. According to that which is written, "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." S. Matt. xxi. 31. And again, "Many that are first shall be last: and the last shall be first." S. Matt. xix. 30.

For albeit that Christ preached from the commencement of His ministry both to the Pharisees and to the multitude, yet the Pharisees, as of higher rank, were the first invited; to preserve the unity of the parable; and also because Christ would have the scribes first, by reason of their position, acknowledge Him, and then be His witnesses amongst the people. But the contrary came to pass. "They," says Euthymius, "who refused to acknowledge Him, were the chief Priests and rulers of the people, and these, who were chosen in their stead, were the humble and the outcasts of the nation." For of a truth "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." 1 Cor. i. 27.

Symbolically. S. Augustine says (*serm.* 34 *De Verb. Dom.*): Who were those that came, but the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind? Those who absented themselves were those who thought themselves rich, and robust; who, as it were, could walk well, and see clearly, the hopelessness of whose state was proportionate to their pride.

Let the beggars come to the feast at the invitation of Him who made Himself poor that we might become rich.

Let the weak come, for the physician has no need of those that are whole, but of those that are sick.

Let the lame come and say, "Order my steps in Thy word."

Let the blind come and say, "Lighten Thou mine eyes, that I sleep not in death."

These poor and miserable creatures teach us:

1. That none are to be despised, but that salvation in Christ is to be offered to all.

2. That it is easier for the poor to obey the gospel precepts, and therefore to be saved, than for the rich.

3. That we must despair of no one's salvation, however wretched, blind, or perverse he may be.

Ver. 22.—*And the servant said, Yet there is room.* The number of the elect is not yet complete. Heaven is not yet filled with those who are to obtain salvation. Learn to imitate the zeal of this servant, who rejected no one, however blind, deformed, or maimed, but busied himself in summoning and saving more and more.

Ver. 23.—*And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges*, &c. Go forth, without the city—without Jerusalem, and beyond Judæa, and call the Gentiles to Christ.

Into the highways. "The partings of the highways" (S. Matt. xxii. 9), *i.e.* into the roads which lead to all nations and to the ends of the earth.

And hedges. The hamlets and villages, which were surrounded not by walls but by hedges. Hence we are taught that the Gospel is to be preached by the Apostles and their successors, even to savage and uncivilised nations; a duty which is recognised more and more by the followers of Christ.

Hence the servant does not say, as he added of the Jews in the 22nd verse, "it is done as thou hast commanded;" because the work is not yet finished among the Gentiles; it is being done more fully from day to day, to be completed at the end of the world. "The meaning of this verse," says Titus, "is, that after the Israelites had been gathered in, the people of the Gentiles were also to be called, *i.e.* men who, as being born and brought up in the country, in the highways and hedges without the city, were entirely uncivilised." Or, as Theophylact interprets it, "The Israelites were within the city, having received the law, and having been granted a more civilised lot in life; but the Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, and without God in the world." (Eph. ii. 12.)

Compel them to come in. Many of the Gentile nations were wholly given up to idolatry and evil living. Hence they were to be compelled to salvation by the burning zeal and energy of the preacher, by miracles, even by the scourge and judgments of God sent upon them "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. ii. 4). For "our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." 1 Thess. i. 5.

"Therefore," says Suarez, "compel them to come in, either by afflicting them with labour and sorrows, or by converting them, as it were, miraculously, by a mighty effort and powerful call."

Ver. 24.—*For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper,* because they made light of my invitation. So the Pharisees and the rulers of the Jews, given up to earthly enjoyments, are to be excluded from the heavenly feast because, called by Christ to accept the teaching of His gospel, they refused the invitation. "Because I have called and ye refused, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." Prov. i. 24. Then shall they, too late, repent of their ingratitude and folly, and shall say, "What hath pride profited us, or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? For those things are passed away like a shadow." Wisdom v. 8.

So far Christ had said all these things in the house of the Pharisee, whose invitation He had accepted, in order that He might instruct him and his friends. Let all those, therefore, who are followers of Christ, imitate His example, and not take part in any entertainment unless it be for the purpose of reaping spiritual fruit.

Ver. 26.—*If any man come to Me,* &c. That having left all (ver. 33) he may, with the Apostles and the seventy disciples, follow Me, the Master and Teacher of perfection.

All these things are of evangelical counsel, and not of precept; although they may be said in a measure to extend to all Christians, inasmuch as they are bound to hate their parents, *i.e.* to give up the love of their friends and relations—even the love of life, if such love oppose itself to the law of Christ. Hence Maldonatus thinks this to be of precept; Jansenius, of counsel. But see S. Matt. x. 37.

Suarez (*lib.* ii. *De Concurs. Dom.*) says, "to hate" signifies the same as "to love less," in which sense it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Rom. ix. 13.

Ver. 28. *For which of you, intending to build a tower*, &c. By means of this parable Christ would teach us with what prudence we ought to test our bodily, and above all our spiritual strength, as well as such gifts of grace as we may possess, before we attempt to build the lofty tower of evangelical perfection, and declare war against ourselves, our passions, our friends and the whole world; lest afterward, recoiling from so great an undertaking, we incur the loss of all our outlay, and also the reproach of having rashly commenced a building which we were unable to finish, and of having entered upon a war in which we were worsted.

"He counts the cost," says the Gloss, "who perceives that money will have to be spent, *i.e.* that the heart must be weaned from corrupt desires, and the soul prepared for adversity."

Symbolically. Salmeron (*tom.* vii. *tract* 24) says, "Christ puts forth two parables to teach the rulers of the Church that they must be skilled both in action and in contemplation, the one about building a tower, which is a symbol of contemplative life, for a tower commands an extensive prospect; the other, about engaging in war against a hostile king, which is significative of the active life.

"For those who are novices in the way of God, and are learning, as it were, the first elements of the perfect life, are called upon to battle with their enemies, and to fight against their vices and evil passions.

"By the tower therefore we may understand the religious state, which is coupled to the comtemplative life.

"1. Because as a tower overtops all other buildings, so does a life of religion excel all other vocations and callings.

"2. As a tower gives grace to a city, so is the religious life an ornament to the Church.

"3. As a tower is a look-out, to discover the movements of the enemy, so in the contemplative life we look forth on the wiles of our adversary, and on the good and evil laid up in futurity.

"4. As a tower is a protection to them that dwell therein, so is a life of religion a defence against the world, the flesh and the devil, and a safe storehouse for the fruits of good works. So it is written, Cant. iv. 4, 'Thy neck is like the tower of David, . . . whereon hang a thousand bucklers,' *i.e.* the bucklers of holy vows, holy examples, and holy observances.

"5. As every one ought to count the cost before he commences to build a tower, so a year is given a novice in order that he may make trial of his fitness for the religious life. For he whose heart is fixed on heaven looks down as from a lofty tower upon the world which lies beneath, and counts it worthless."

So S. Chrysostom (*hom.* 15 *ad. Pop.*), says: "Just as to those who look back from the highest mountain tops, not only men and trees but even entire cities look small, and great armies seem to be creeping about like ants, so to those whose minds are uplifted by the constant contemplation of heavenly things, all human affairs, power, glory, riches, and the like, seem minute and worthless: unworthy of the greatness of the immortal soul."

Hear also the lament of S. Gregory, when he was called from a religious order to be the Pope: "Seeking nothing, in this world, and fearing nothing, I seemed to stand on a certain eminence, so that I thought that the promise of God, 'I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth' (Isa. lviii. 14), had well-nigh been fulfilled in me. For he rides upon the high places of the earth, who despises and treads under feet all that this world counts great and glorious. But suddenly cast down from this eminence, and plunged into the whirl of temptation, I have became a prey to terror and affright, for although I fear nothing for myself, I fear much for those committed to my charge" (*Lib.* 1, *epist.* 5 and 6).

Ver. 31.—*Or what king, going to make war against another king*, &c. By this, says Titus, we are given to understand that we have a war to wage against the hostile powers of Satan and that law which, reigning in our members, is continually the cause of inward perturbation and strife.

So also S. Cyril: "The ten thousand of him who is going to fight

with the king, who has double the number, signify the simplicity of the Christian about to contend with the subtlety of the devil." And Theophylact: "The king is sin, and devils are his satellites, who, compared to us, are considered to have greater strength."

But S. Gregory (*Hom.* 37) gives another interpretation. "The king that is about to come against us is Christ, who will come with a double army against a single one. For while we are scarcely prepared in deeds only, He will discomfit us at once, both in thought and deed. Let us send Him therefore an embassy; our tears, our works of mercy, and propitiatory victim."

Ver. 32.—*Or else, while the other is yet a great way off*, &c. This verse gives completeness to the parable, but is not to be taken as the teaching of Christ, for we may not bargain with either the evil spirits or our vices; against these we must wage ἄσπονδον πόλεμον, an irreconcileable war.

This verse may however be interpreted in this way—

"He that desires to follow me perfectly in poverty and in the preaching of the gospel, must make an entire surrender of self, and give up parents, friends, and possessions, thus making them enemies.

"But if he see that he has not strength enough for this, let him make conditions of peace with them, and bind himself by the gospel precepts only, leaving for others the counsels of poverty, obedience, and the preaching of salvation. For this is that which Christ would teach, as is clear from the following verse; hence he makes mention of two armies, two leaders, and two banners, one His own, and the other that of Lucifer. Wherefore the Apostles and their successors have need to bear in mind that they are engaged in actual warfare against the devil and his angels." S. Cyril.

Ver. 33.—*So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath*, &c. This is the post-parable, and sums up the teaching of the parable itself. "He who refuseth to give up all, in order that he may live a life of evangelical perfection, cannot be My disciple as the Apostles were." And again, It would be better for him who is unwilling to give up all, when persecution or necessity demand it, and will not submit to the loss of possessions, family, and even life

itself for the gospel's sake, not to take My yoke upon him, rather than having begun to lead a Christian life, to fall away and apostatise from the faith. For such an one adds the sin of apostasy to that of unbelief, according to the Scripture: "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 2 S. Pet. ii. 21.

Christ here teaches us that to become a disciple is no child's play, but a work for men, needing great gifts of grace, and much strength of purpose and much vigour of mind.

The Christians of the first three centuries, particularly those of Rome, in time of persecution, cheerfully made sacrifice of their fortunes, their liberty and their lives, for the gospel's sake. "Few," says Bede, "are wishing to leave all and give up earthly cares; but it is for every one who is faithful to renounce all, *i.e.* so to hold the things that are of the world, that he may not be held in the world."

Hear also S. Gregory (*hom.* 36): I "would advise you to leave all, but I dare not. But if you are not able to give up all, be masters of your earthly possessions; let them not gain the mastery over you."

Ver. 34.—*Salt is good, but if the salt have lost his savour*, &c. Salt is good as long as it retains its peculiar properties. So also ye who are my Apostles, as long as ye preserve your spiritual powers, will be useful to the world to season it with the salt of gospel faith and wisdom. But if ye lose your savour, ye will be good for nothing but to be despised and trodden under feet of men, for there is no one to season or correct you. Bede. See also Comment. on S. Matt. v. 13, and S. Mark ix. 50.

This parable applies not only to the Apostles, but in a measure to all Christians. For they ought, by the innocence of their lives and their good example, to season unbelievers who are, as it were, unsalted.

Ver. 35.—*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* Let him hear and meditate on what I say and teach. Our Lord calls attention to the seriousness and the difficulty of the matter about which He has been teaching. See Comment. on S. Matt. xiii. 9–13.

CHAPTER XV.

1 *The parable of the lost sheep:* 8 *of the piece of silver:* 11 *of the prodigal son.*

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.
2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

3 ¶ And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

8 ¶ Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find *it*?

9 And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

11 ¶ And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to *me*. And he divided unto them *his* living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way

off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it;* and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29 And he answering said to *his* father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Ver. 1.—*Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners.* πάντες, all, that is, many came together to hear Christ, attracted by His sanctity and by the loving-kindness with which He called sinners to Himself, and promised pardon and salvation to the penitent. For His preaching was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." S. Matt. iv. 17.

Ver. 2.—*And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured.* For as they avoided the touch of unclean bodies, so did they avoid that of sinful souls. Hence they did not deign to speak to sinners, much less to eat with them. This constituted the proud spirit of the Pharisees, who thought themselves pure and holy in all things pertaining to the law, and therefore kept apart from the impure that they might not be defiled. To them the spirit of Christ was clearly opposed; for He came into the world to save sinners, and therefore sought opportunity to converse with them, and when invited was present at their feasts; for nothing is more pleasing to God than the con-

version of the sinner. "From which we may gather," says S. Gregory (*hom.* 34), "that true justice, *i.e.* the justice of Christ, is full of compassion, but that the false justice of the Pharisees is scornful." "Indeed, it is," says S. Chrysostom, "the mark of the apostolic life, to think for the salvation of souls."

Ver. 4.—*What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?* For a sheep is a simple and foolish animal, which, in search of pasture, easily loses its way and wanders from the fold, and when once astray is unable to return. So that there is need of a shepherd to go forth and seek it.

So we, by reason of our sinful lusts, were as wandering sheep, treading the path which led to perdition, without a thought of God or of heaven, or of the salvation of our sŏuls. Wherefore Christ came down from heaven to seek us, and to lead us back from the way of destruction to that which leadeth to eternal life. So we read, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 6; and again, "Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." 1 S. Pet. ii. 25.

Ver. 5.—*And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.* Or as the Arabic renders it, "He carries it on his shoulders joyfully," that he may the more quickly return it to the flock.

In like manner on Christ "was laid," as saith the prophet Isaiah, "the iniquity of us all." Hence Gregory of Nyssa, writes in the *Catena*, "When the shepherd had found the sheep, he did not punish it, he did not drive it to the fold, but placing it on his shoulder, and carrying it gently, he reunited it with the flock." Oh how wondrous is the meekness, clemency, and love of Christ our Lord! It was to represent this love to the faithful that Christ is depicted in our temples with the lost sheep on His shoulders, carrying it back to the flock, and it is related of the son of Charlemagne, that laying aside his royal state, he became a monk, and when employed in keeping sheep, followed to the letter the example set by the Good

Shepherd: for humility and the imitation of Christ is in truth the glory of Christian kings.

Ver. 6.—*Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.* Συγχάρητέ μοι, Let My joy be one with yours—partake of My joy. His joy is so great that he cannot confine it to Himself, His friends must rejoice also. He further indicates that the event is such a happy one, that it ought to afford matter for rejoicing to all. He says not, "Rejoice with the sheep that is found," but, "with Me." Because truly our life is His joy. S. Gregory.

Ver. 7.—*I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven*, &c., *i.e.* greater joy, for such is implied by the comparative particle ἤ, "than."

The angels then, and the saints in heaven, rejoice with exceeding great joy when it is made known to them, by the revelation of God, that a sinner is converted; for when such an one by repentance passes from condemnation to life, it is a gain to the sinner—to the angels—and above all to God Himself.

The sinner passes from sin unto righteousness, from hell to heaven. The angels therefore rejoice at the blessedness of such an one, because, says Euthymius, they are kindly disposed towards men and because by repentance men become like them in purity and in holiness. They rejoice also on their own account because the ruin which was effected by Lucifer and his angels is remedied by the justification and sanctification of men, and because the places from which these angels fell are restored and filled up. It is a joy to God because He is φιλόψυχος, a lover of souls, and thirsts for the salvation of men.

Again the angels rejoice that the desire of God, whom they love above all things, is fulfilled, and that He is a partaker of this joy, as well as honoured by the penitence of the sinner. Apposite to this matter is the vision of Carpus, to whom Christ made known that He so longed for the conversion of sinners, as to be ready again to suffer death upon the Cross, if thereby this object could be effected. And Palladius relates that a certain Anchorite, who had fallen into sin, repented in sackcloth and ashes with many tears;

whereupon an angel appeared to him and said, "The Lord hath accepted thy penitence, and hath had compassion on thee. Take heed that thou art not again led astray."

By this argument, Christ rebukes the Pharisees for murmuring against Him because He companied with sinners in order to convert them. For the conversion of sinners is a work most pleasing to God and His angels. The Pharisees ought therefore to take part in this work, and to share in the rejoicing. For "all the fruit" of the Incarnation, and of the death of Christ upon the Cross is "to take away sin," Isa. xxvii. 9,—"to bring in everlasting righteousness," and to extend the kingdom of God. S. Matt. vi. 10. The knowledge of this ought to excite in every follower of Christ a zealous love for the souls of men.

Hence S. Gregory, when he heard that the English had been converted by the preaching of Augustine, rejoiced in spirit, and wrote; "If there is great joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, what joy, think you, has there been over the conversion of so great a people; for by their repentance and faith they have condemned the sins which they aforetime had committed. Whilst heaven is thus rejoicing, let us repeat the angelic strain, and let us all with one accord exclaim, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.'"

More than over ninety and nine just persons. God and His holy angels, then, rejoice over one penitent more than over one righteous man, nay, more than over ninety and nine just persons; because from the conversion of the sinner there arises a new joy, which seems more perceptible, and is in reality felt more than that continuous and long-standing joy which attaches itself to the ninety and nine; a joy which, although actually the greater, seems to men to lose its freshness by reason of its long duration. For the novelty of a thing which we long for awakens in us a vast and a new joy, which is felt all the more on account of its novelty, as we find when we receive tidings of victories or conversions; and Christ often speaks after the manner of men, especially in His parables. The saying of S. Bernard, that "The tears of penitents are the wine of the angels,"

applies here:—The joy over the conversion of a sinner, writes Emmanuel Sà., is sensibly greater. Although in other respects, a man undoubtedly rejoices more over ninety-nine sheep than over one, and God joys more over ninety and nine just persons than over one sinner that repenteth.

S. Gregory adds that God and His angels rejoice the more, because penitents are wont to be more fervent in their love than those who have not fallen away. And elsewhere he says, "The life of fervent devotion which follows after sins committed is often more pleasing to God than that innocence which grows sluggish in its security." "Just as the leader in battle loves that soldier more who, having turned from flight, bravely pursues the enemy, than he who never turned his back and never did a brave act." "And as again the husbandman loves that land more which, after bearing thorns, yields abundant fruit, than that which never had thorns, and never gave him a plentiful crop." Finally (*Hom.* 34), he cites the example of Victorinus who, having fallen into carnal sin, entered a monastery, and there subjected himself to the severest penance, and so merited to be transfused with the light of heaven, and to hear the voice of God, "Thy sin is forgiven thee!"

If therefore penance be of such avail in a sinner, how great, infers S. Gregory, must be its power in a just man! For many, he says, are conscious of no evil, yet subject themselves to austerities as extreme as if they were beset by every kind of sin. They eschew all things, even such as are lawful, they gird themselves about with a lofty disdain of earth and earthly things, they consider every pleasure forbidden, they deprive themselves of such good things as are allowed them, things that are seen they despise, they yearn for the things which are invisible, they rejoice in mourning, in all things they humble themselves, and deplore sins of thought, as many mourn over sins actually committed.

Ver. 8.—*Either what woman having ten pieces of silver*, &c. "Sweep," or as the Arabic renders it, "cleanse;" not "overturn," as some read with S. Gregory.

The "piece of silver," or drachma, was a coin weighing the eighth

part of an ounce. Hence, S. Cyril explains, that by the parable of the lost sheep we are to understand, mystically, that we are the creatures of God who made us, and the sheep of His pasture, but that by this second parable we are taught that we were created in the image and likeness of God, just as the coin bears the image of the king.

S. Gregory (*Hom.* 34), very fully explains the parable, and applies it in the following manner: "He who is signified by the shepherd, is signified also by the woman. For it is God Himself—God and the wisdom of God. And because there is an image impressed on the piece, the woman lost the piece of silver when man, who was created after the image of God, by sinning fell away from the likeness of his Creator. The woman lighted a candle, because the wisdom of God appeared in man. For the candle is a light in an earthen vessel, but the light in an earthen vessel is the Godhead in the flesh, and when the candle was lit she overturned (evertit) the house. Because as soon as His divinity shone forth through the flesh, all our consciences were appalled. But the word 'overturn' differs not from the 'cleanse' or 'sweep' of the other MSS. Because the corrupt mind, if it be not first overthrown through fear is not cleansed from its habitual faults. But when the house is overturned the piece of silver is found, for when the conscience of man is disturbed, the likeness of the Creator is restored in him." And again, "Who are the friends and neighbours but those heavenly powers afore mentioned, who are near to the Divine Wisdom, inasmuch as they approach Him through the grace of continual vision?" Hence in conclusion he says, "The woman had ten pieces of silver, because there are nine orders of angels, but, that the number of the elect might be filled up, man, the tenth, was created, who even after his sin did not fall utterly away from his Maker, because the eternal Wisdom, shinning through the flesh by His miracles, restored him by the light of the earthen vessel."

Or, as Theophylact interprets it, "The friends are all the heavenly powers; but the neighbours, the thrones—cherubims and seraphims—which are most nigh unto God."

Lastly, S. Gregory Nyssen, says, "The ten pieces of silver are so many virtues, of which we ought to lack none, for like the commandments they are complete in themselves (decem). The candle is the divine word or perhaps the torch of repentance; the neighbours, reason, desire, anger, and such like affections."

Ver. 11.—*And He said, A certain man had two sons.* This parable is the third of the series, and like the two preceding ones, is designed to show the joy which is in heaven over the conversion of a sinner. And so there are three principal persons in the parable, the father and his two sons, the elder careful of his possessions, the younger a spendthrift. The father is God, who created all men, or Christ, who redeemed and regenerated all men with His blood, and who daily regenerates them by baptism. The two sons are understood by universal consent to represent the Jews and the Gentiles. By the elder, who was ever with his father, we may understand the Jews; by the younger the Gentiles, who having worshipped God in the days of Adam and Noah, turned aside to idols and the sins of the flesh: an interpretation which is borne out by the 25th verse, for it was the Jews who murmured because the Gentiles were received into grace and favour by Christ.

But still more in accordance with the purpose of the parable, we may take the two sons to represent the just and the unjust, whether Jews or Gentiles. For the sinners with whom. Christ companied, thereby causing the Pharisees to murmur against Him, were clearly Jews and not Gentiles.

The elder son represents the just, *i.e.* those who were really just, as well as those who, like the Scribes and Pharisees, claimed to be such.

The younger son, the prodigal, is put for open and notorious sinners, such as the publicans and harlots, with whom Christ was wont to associate in order that He might win them from the error of their way. So S. Jerome and most other interpreters explains the parable.

Ver. 12.—*And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.* The younger, *i.e.* sinners

and harlots. For youth is less restrained, more foolish, more inconstant, and more prone to indulgences of every kind. According to the Fathers, the "goods," "substantia," must be taken to mean man's free will, called in Greek βίος. "Because by it," says S. Jerome, "man lives freely and as it pleases him." "For," observes Theophylact, "the substance of man is the capacity of reason which is accompanied by free will." S. Ambrose and others, by substance, understand more fitly the grace of God, virtues and good habits. For it is these which are really wasted and destroyed by the sinner, whilst his free will cannot be lost, as is clear from the parable. You may therefore take the word to mean all the gifts of God, of body and soul, of nature and grace; for these the younger son demands to be entirely given up to him, because he was unwilling any longer to submit to the authority of his father, but desirous of being his own master, and of being free to use or abuse the gifts of God as might seem to him good.

So S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang. lib.* ii. *q.* 35) writes, "To live, to understand, to remember, to excel in quickness of intellect, these things are gifts of God, which men receive into their own power by freewill." So also S. Jerome, Titus, and Euthymius.

And he divided unto them his living. Placing the gifts just mentioned at the free disposal of each, for "He left man in the hand of his counsel." Ecclus. xv. 14.

Ver. 13.—*And not many days after the younger son gathered all together*, or, according to the Syriac version, "collected together all that had come to him," *and took his journey into a far country*—"far off," says Euthymius, "not by local separation, but by separation in point of virtue." Such is a state of concupiscence and sin, for the sinner by sinning goes far from God and from heaven, and subjects himself to the dominion of Satan. "But," says Euthymius, "the elder son being wise, remained with his father."

Hence S. Augustine goes on to say, "The far country is forgetfulness of God, a forgetfulness which is mutual, for inasmuch as the sinner forgets God, God in His turn is in a manner forgetful of the sinner, *i.e.* God ceases to bestow on him light, grace, or guidance."

For S. Jerome says, "We must bear in mind that we are with God, or depart from Him, according to our disposition, not according to 'distances of place.'"

Therefore, adds Theophylact, "when a man departs from God, and from the fear of God, he wastes and consumes all God's gifts."

And there wasted his substance, i.e., all the gifts of nature and grace. For the sinner, giving himself up to pleasure and licentiousness, incurs the loss of all God's gifts of grace.

He becomes dull of understanding and is unable to recognise God, or the beauty of holiness. He grows forgetful of God's law and God's goodness towards him. He so corrupts his will as to prefer vice to virtue, pleasure to reason, earth to heaven, the evil one to God; and forsaking the paths of virtue, gives himself up to every kind of evil. Hence he becomes destitute of counsel, reason, sense, and everything that is good; and at last, with all the powers of his soul and body, he worships the creature rather than the Creator, and falls into that sin to which the Psalmist refers, "So they that forsake Thee shall perish; Thou hast destroyed all them that commit fornication against Thee." Ps. lxxiii. 26.

The prodigal son "wasted all the graces of nature," says Euthymius, because, adds S. Augustine, "he made a wrong use of his natural gifts." "He then," says Titus, "expended his goods" (substantiam), *i.e.*, the light which was in him, temperance, the knowledge of the truth, the remembrance of God. And lastly, says Euthymius again, "he corrupted the gift which he had received at his baptism, *i.e.* nobility of soul, and the capability of living a godly life, for such things as these made up the riches of the prodigal.

With riotous living. By living an abandoned life (ἀσώτως), not only sinful but also luxurious and intemperate.

"A prodigal life," says the Gloss, "loves to occupy itself in outward show, forgetful of God, who has His dwelling within."

Ver. 14.—*And when he had spent all . . . he began to be in want.* Or, according to the Arabic, "he became destitute," as those who lose by one year's debauchery all that their parents have left them;

and after that are reduced to misery and to begging their bread. Nor do they lose their property only, but their health and good name as well, and by reason of the foulness of their habits and the diseases which they contract, become a burden to themselves, and a disgust to their fellowmen. For it is acknowledged by all that luxury and extravagance make the richest poor, and reduce men to the very verge of starvation.

Mystically. The sinner suffers from the want of all things, whether of nature or of grace, because he turns the gifts which he possesses to his own destruction, and therefore is in a far worse condition than if he had never received them.

And again, the sinner being without God, lacks everything; for all things depend upon Him, and in Him live and have their being. Hence the Interlinear, "Every place whence the Father is absent, is a place of penury and want." For he who has not God possesses nothing, although he be king of the whole world. Again, he who has God possesses all things, although he may not have a farthing to call his own. Or, as S. Francis expresses it, "God is mine and all things." For God alone can be said to be; and all things else compared to Him, not to be. See Exod. iii.

Moreover, the Gloss says, "Pleasure always hungers for itself—the more we indulge in it, the more insatiably we thirst after it;" and S. Jerome, "Our health and strength depart from us by reason of our sinful indulgences, yet we do not lose the desire of indulging.

> "While yet in sport, for other sports we burn,
> In gardens fair, for other gardens yearn."

Ver. 15.—*And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country*, i.e., to an evil spirit, for the devils are the citizens of the country far off from God. So S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang. lib.* ii. *q.* 33.) says, "He joined himself to a certain prince of the air belonging to the army of the devil, whose fields signify the manner of his power. The swine are the unclean spirits which are under him, and to feed them is to work those things in which they delight."

So also S. Ambrose, "The citizen is the prince of this world," and in like manner the Gloss.

S. Peter Chrysologus (*Serm.* 2.) says, "Behold the effect of unbridled desires. It turned a citizen into an alien, a son into a hireling, a rich man into a beggar, a free man into a slave. It associated him whom it separated from a kind father with swine; that he who had despised a holy affection might be the slave of the greedy herd."

S. Ambrose judges rightly that by the expression "he joined himself to" we are to understand a dangerous as well as a laborious service. For as a bird is snared when seeking food, so the unhappy sinner, hoping for the delights of freedom, falls into a perilous slavery.

And he sent him into his field. That is, says Bede, "he became a slave of earthly desires."

To feed swine. "To feed swine," says S. Chrysostom in the *Catena*, "is to nourish in the soul sordid and unclean thoughts. See here how marvellously the condition of the sinner is changed, as a just punishment for the foolish use he made of his freedom. He who was unwilling to be held in honour as a son, is obliged to become the bond slave of an alien. He who would not obey the laws of God, is compelled to serve Satan. He who would not abide in his father's palace, is sent to dwell amongst clowns. He who would not associate with his brethren and with princes, becomes the attendant and companion of swine. He who refused the bread of angels, would fain satisfy his hunger with husks from the hog-trough."

Ver. 16.—*And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat.* So those who foolishly squander their possessions on others, find none to give them even husks in their misery and want. S. Chrysostom (*Serm.* 1) says, "Hunger, to luxury a torment, is now his lot, that where his guilt had been flagrant there an avenging punishment might rage." And again, "How cruel a service! He lives with unclean animals, yet does not share in their feast. Wretched man that he is; half famished, he hungers for the swine's coarse food, yet does not obtain it."

S. Jerome (*Epist.* 146) here remarks, "that the Devil, when he has brought a man into subjection, fires his soul with desires of all kinds, but cheats him of their gratification, that by longing after them he may increase his guilt, and by failing to gratify them may add to his punishment and misery." Such is the deceitfulness and the tyranny of Satan. "Husks" are the empty pods of beans, peas, and the like, which fill but do not nourish the body. Yet country folk mix these husks with flour or meal, and make thereof a common kind of black bread on which they live. Hence Horace (*Epist.* 1, *lib.* ii.) writes, "He lives on husks and coarse bread." Jansenius understands by "husks," the fruit of the Carob tree, which is like a bean, of a blackish colour, curved, as long as a man's finger, and as broad as his thumb. Each pod contains four berries called ceratia from their likeness to a horn (κέρας). These afford excellent food for swine, and are also eaten by men.

But by "husks" the Fathers understand "that worldly and vain knowledge which begets vanity, such as the writings of the poets, or the harangues of the orators." "Wherein," says S. Augustine, "this man sought to find something belonging to the higher life, but could not." The word, however, may be taken to mean more fully "carnal gratifications which puff out and afflict the soul but do not satisfy its yearnings." So S. Chrysostom in the *Catena* writes, "If thou lovest good wine, thou lovest husks; if thou longest for gold, thou dost seek for husks; if thou followest after sensual pleasures, thou askest for the food of swine."

Ver. 17.—*And when he came to himself*, or, as the Arabic renders it, "when he was considering within himself." Euthymius says, "becoming master of himself, and as it were waking up from the deep sleep of the drunken." "Returning from his wanderings abroad." Theophylact. "For," says the Interlinear, "he who has gone away from himself does well to return;" and the prodigal had been in a manner beside himself, and a raving madman, but his misery gave him understanding, and hunger taught him to be wise. So S. Gregory Nyssen. (*Tract de Oratione*) writes, "He did not return to his former state of happiness until, coming to himself, he felt the

full weight of his cares." And S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang. lib.* xxi.): "He turned his thoughts (intentionem) from these things, which act externally as snares and temptations, to his inner conscience." "For," says S. Ambrose, "he who returns to it returns to himself, but he who departs from Christ forfeits his rights in Christ."

How many hired servants of my father's, &c. They have bread enough and to spare, but I, his son, am perishing with hunger. So God is wont to take away from those who live for pleasure all their delights, and send them hunger, sickness, and pain, that they may return to a better mind, and see what happiness they have forfeited, and into what misery they have fallen; which is the first stage of repentance. Hence Titus writes, "Coming to himself, *i.e.* comparing his former happiness with his after misery, he thought of what he was whilst he abode with his father, and meditated over and over again on the vile and wretched state to which he had reduced himself by his rejection of God, and subjection to Satan." Learn then from the example of the prodigal, that "repentance follows on hasty counsel, and that a bad beginning makes a bad ending;" and again, "that thou be not conquered by a shameful adversary, regard pleasure only when it is departing from thee, for pleasure is the food of the wicked."

Mystically. If we serve God and follow virtue in hope of worldly gain, we are hirelings; if from fear, slaves; if from love, sons. As the Interlinear says, "How many Jews are there who keep the law only for the sake of present prosperity, and obtain of God that which they desire; but I, who neglect God's law, prosper neither in my temporal nor my spiritual concerns."

S. Augustine, on the other hand, says, "These are the reflections of a man who is coming to a better mind again, and finds himself amongst those who preach the truth, not from love of the truth, but from the desire of earthly gain." But the Gloss takes higher ground: "The hirelings are they who busy themselves in walking worthily, looking for the reward which is to be. These have bread enough and to spare, *i.e.* they are sustained by the daily nourishment of Divine grace."

He then who is restrained from vice by fear of punishment is the slave; by hope and longing for the kingdom of heaven, the hireling; by love of that which is good, the son. And Theophylact, in like manner, makes this threefold distinction amongst those who are saved.

The Interlinear again, and others who understand by the two sons the Jews and Gentiles, explain thus: "The Jews, who like hirelings serve God in hope of obtaining the good things of this world, possess them plentifully; but the people of the Gentiles, together with the idolaters, are wholly cut off from the truth."

Ver. 18.—*I will arise and go to my father.* "I will arise," says the Interlinear, "because I perceive that I have fallen prone before idolatry and vice. I will go to my father, for I have wandered far from him, and am wearing away my life in misery and want. I will rise from this wretched life. I will break away from my vices, cease from sin, amend my life. I will repent, and humbly beg of God the pardon of my sin."

"Well does he say, 'I will arise,'" writes S. Jerome (*Epist.* 146), "for away from his father he could not stand upright. It is the part of sinners to lie prone, of the just to stand upright." For as Chrysologus (*Serm.* 1) says, "As long as a man is with his father, his state is happy, his service free, and his safety assured. He reverences his father with gladness. If corrected it is with gentleness. Though poor he is rich, and his possessions are secure." And again, "he determines to return, because he perceived that with a stranger his liberty was slavery, and because he believed that with his father his slavery would be liberty."

And will say unto him. These words, says Titus, are few, but enough for my salvation; for I know my father's loving-kindness, and that he will have compassion on the penitent, whom he did not abandon, even when wallowing in the foulness of sin.

Father, I have sinned. "This," says S. Ambrose, "is his first confession to the author of nature, the dispenser of mercy, the judge of his sin. For although God knows all things, He waits to hear the acknowledgment of our sins. because he who takes the burden

of his sin upon himself lessens its weight, and he who by confession anticipates the accuser, deprives the accusation of its sting. In vain wilt thou endeavour to hide from Him, whom nothing escapes, and you may safely discover what you know to be already known."

God, therefore, justly and fitly demands of the sinner the confession of his sin.

1. Because a criminal ought to humble himself, and confess his crime, if he would be forgiven.

2. Because, according to Origen (*Hom.* ii. on Ps. xxxviii.), as a disordered stomach must be purged by emetics, so must the soul which is full of corruption be purified by confession.

3. Because the sinner has cast contempt on the majesty of God, and can only make amends for his fault by repentance. For repentance gives glory to God, and restores to Him the honour which sin takes away. In a word, the penitent acknowledges that he himself is a sinner, but that God is most holy.

4. The confession of the sinner therefore is for the praise and glory of God the Creator, as well as of Jesus Christ our Saviour. "For," says S. Cyprian, or the author of the Treatise on the Passion, whoever he may be, "when the sinner takes upon himself the office of judge and tormentor, becoming his own prosecutor, and showing by the shame he exhibits that his confession is genuine, his entire self-sacrifice obtains pardon for him in the sight of God. For God does not pass judgment twice on the same offence."

Against heaven. That is, (1.) I have sinned so grievously that my sins, as it were, cry to heaven for vengeance, or by a Hebraism, we may understand "against heaven" to mean, against God who dwelleth therein. (See S. Matt. xxi. 25.)

2. "Against heaven," because in preferring earth to heaven, I have committed a great wrong and have lightly esteemed heavenly things; so that if heaven were endowed with voice and reason, it would cry out and make accusation against me.

3. "Against heaven" because heaven is my home, and I am only a sojourner here on earth. I have therefore betrayed my native land. So S. Gregory Nyssen, (*De Oratione*), says, "He would not

have confessed that he had sinned against heaven, unless he had been persuaded that heaven was his country and that he had sinned in leaving it." And S. Jerome, "He sins against heaven who leaves the heavenly Jerusalem."

4. "Against heaven," *i.e.* "against the angels and those that dwell therein," says the Interlinear, and also S. Augustine.

5. Or "against heaven" because according to S. Ambrose, "he had wasted the gifts of heaven." By which we may understand "the endowments of the soul and the spiritual gifts which are impaired by sin and by our departure from the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all."

Symbolically, S. Chrysostom, in the *Catena*, says, "He sins against heaven who sins against the humanity of Christ, which although above us as heaven, is yet visible." For the sinner makes of none effect the blood of Christ, and in a manner "crucifies the Son of God afresh." Heb. vi. 6.

And before Thee. "Who alone," says S. Chrysostom, "seest all things, and to whom the thoughts of all hearts are revealed. Great then is the shamelessness of the sinner in daring to sin before the living God, who will punish him for his offences in the day of judgment, and who not unfrequently inflicts punishment in this life as a warning to others not to offend."

S. Jerome here explains that "he had sinned against his father in that, forsaking his Creator, he had bowed down in worship to idols of wood and of stone."

Symbolically, S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang. lib.* ii. *q.* 33) interprets the words "before thee" to mean "in the inmost conscience." For the sinner ought to blush even for the sins which he commits in secret, and for the conscience which he defiles, renders dumb, and hands over to Satan.

Ver. 19.—*And am no more worthy to be called thy son.* Because, says S. Jerome, I preferred to serve idols, and to be the slave of vices. "He does not presume," says Bede, "to ask to be treated as a son," because, adds Euthymius, "his life had been unworthy of such a father."

Make me as one of thy hired servants. I have forfeited my position as son, but cast me not out of thy presence, suffer me to take the lowest place in thy household, says Euthymius, that I may make open confession of my sin. For formerly those who had been put to public penance were not allowed to enter the church, but knelt without, humbly asking the prayers and the pardon of all, as S. Jerome tells us that Fabiola did.

These, says S. Augustine (*lib.* ii. *Quæst. Evang. q.* 33), are the words of one who is turning his thoughts to repentance, not of one actually repentant. For he is not addressing his father, but only determining what to say when he meets him. "But," says Primasius, commenting on Rev. iv., "as the smoke precedes the flame, so must there be confession of sin before the fires of faith and love are kindled in the sinner's heart. Hence the smoke bursts into flame as the fire gains power and intensity; so in like manner confession of sin through force of contrition burns up and becomes aflame with love."

Ver. 20.—*But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.* Before he had given any expression to his penitence, his father prevented him.

See here God's wonderful loving-kindness towards penitent sinners. "He is wont," says Titus, "in His mercy and pity to anticipate the repentance of men;" and, adds S. Gregory of Nyssa, "when he resolved to repent, his father was reconciled to him."

And had compassion, ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, was moved with pity at the sight of his misery.

And ran. In excess of joy, says Euthymius, he waited not for him to draw nigh, but went to meet him, running and thereby showing the greatness of his love.

And fell on his neck, and kissed him. "To fall on his neck," says S. Augustine, "is to lower to his embrace the arm of God, which is Christ; to give the kiss is to comfort by the word of God's grace unto the hope of pardon of sin." But S. Chrysostom says, "The mouth is kissed as that from which the heartfelt confession of the penitent proceeded."

The embrace and the kiss are here set forth as the tokens of

pardon and reconciliation, and of especial love and goodwill, as well as of the exultation and joy with which God and His angels regard a sinner that repenteth.

Ver. 21.—*And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned,* &c. He desires, says the Interlinear, that to be done by grace, which he acknowledges himself to be unworthy of by any merit of his own. (See above on ver. 18.) He omits to say, "make me as one of thy hired servants," either because his father, out of love and joy, had cut short his confession, by bidding the attendants "bring forth the best robe," or because his father's embrace and kiss had encouraged him to hope that again he might be acknowledged as a son. "He does not add," says S. Augustine (*Lib.* ii. *Quæst. Evang. q.* 33), "what he had before determined to say, for after the kiss of his father he most nobly disdained to become a hireling." Titus, however, is of opinion that the words were actually uttered, although S. Luke has not recorded them.

Ver. 22.—*But the father said to his servants,* &c. "The servants," says Theophylact, "are the angels or the priests," or, according to S. Augustine, the preachers, for by their ministry God reconciles sinners to Himself.

The best robe. The "first" robe, that which he was wont to wear before he left his father's house, for from the repetition of the article τὴν στολὴν τὴν πρώτην, it is clear that some particular garment is indicated.

Hence, in the lives of the Fathers, it is related that a certain Bishop saw in a vision two women who were sinners, clothed, after having made sacramental confession, in white garments and radiant with light. He inquired the cause of this from an angel that appeared unto him, and was told that the women, by their confession and tears, had rendered themselves worthy to be numbered with the elect.

And put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. A ring of gold, *i.e.* the mark of a free and rich or noble man, as also are shoes, for slaves go barefoot, but citizens are shod.

Ver. 23.—*And bring hither the fatted calf.* τὸν μόσχον, that particular calf which I ordered to be fattened for such a solemn occasion as this.

All these things, the robe, the ring, the shoes, and the fatted calf, show the delight of the father, *i.e.* the joy of God and His angels at the conversion of a sinner, and teach us that by the great mercy of God, a penitent is restored to the same, or even a better position than that which he held before he fell into sin.

But with S. Augustine, S. Jerome, and Bede, we may attach a separate meaning to each.

So we may take the best robe to mean not innocence, for this once lost cannot be regained, but first grace and love. Thus the Interlinear interprets it as, "the robe of the Holy Spirit, which is an earnest of immortal life." According to S. Ambrose, it is "the cloke of wisdom;" but S. Augustine considers it "the dignity which Adam lost."

By the ring we may understand the express image of God, which some see in one virtue, some in another.

"The ring," says Bede, "is the seal of our unfeigned faith," or, according to S. Chrysostom in the *Catena*, the symbol of the seal of salvation, or rather, the badge of betrothment, the pledge of nuptials with Christ. It is "the signet of faith with which the promises are sealed in the hearts of the faithful." Gloss. "The seal of Christ's image, and impress of the truth." Interlinear. "The pledge of the Holy Spirit, because of the participation of grace, which is well signified by the finger." S. Augustine. See Gen. xli. 42; Jer. xxii. 24; Hag. ii. 23.

"On his hand," *i.e.* by his working, that his faith may be made manifest by his works, and that his works may be established by his faith. Interlinear.

By "the shoes on his feet" is typified promptitude in the exercise of acts of virtue, particularly as regards the preaching of the gospel; for those who are converted greatly desire the conversion of others. Or, as S. Augustine explains, "The shoes are the preparation for preaching the gospel, in order not to touch earthly things," that, says S. Chrysostom, "a man may walk firmly along the slippery path of the world"; the course of our life is called in Scripture a foot (pes).

Again, "the shoes" are the examples of good men, which, as it were, leave footprints, to enable us to follow in their steps.

"The fatted calf" is a figure of Christ, who in the Eucharist feeds the just, and those sinners who are penitent, with His body and His blood; comforting and soothing in a wonderful manner those who have been newly converted as well as those who have long since repented.

Hence the Interlinear says, "Christ is the fatted calf abounding in every spiritual virtue, so that He suffices for the salvation of the whole world." And S. Chrysostom: "Christ is called the calf, because of the sacrifice of His body, and fatted, because He made satisfaction for all." And Augustine: "The fatted calf is our Lord Himself in the flesh, loaded with insults. The father commands it to be brought, *i.e.* commands Christ to be preached. He also bids them kill it, in allusion to the death of Christ. For He is then killed to each man who believes him slain."

Let us eat and be merry. God, says Euthymius, is said to eat in proof of His joy. "For," adds S. Jerome (*Ep.* 146), "there can be no rejoicing if our Father be absent from the feast," because, says Bede and S. Ambrose, "the food of the Father is our salvation; the joy of the Father the redemption of our sins." And according to the Gloss, "The salvation of sinners is the refreshment of God and the saints. Observe also that the calf is slain after that the robe, the ring, and the shoes are provided, to teach us that we must put on the hope of the immortality for which we were created, that we must seal our works with the signet of faith, and preach by the confession of Christ, if we would partake of the heavenly mysteries."

Ver. 24.—*For this my son was dead, and is alive again.* He was dead by reason of his sins; he is alive again because of his repentance.

Ver. 28.—*And he was angry, and would not go in.* The anger and the murmuring of the elder son is the application of the parable, and is intended to show how justly God rejoices over the conversion of a sinner, and what answer can be given to those who murmur at the consideration shown to those that repent.

"Hence we learn," says Euthymius, "that God rejoices so greatly

over the return of the prodigal, in order that He may provoke others to jealousy."

So also Theophylact, Titus, and S. Chrysostom in the *Catena;* for it is certain that the righteous do not envy penitent sinners the blessings they enjoy, but rejoice greatly and exult in their happiness. See S. Matt. xx. 11.

Hence we are to understand rather by the murmuring of the elder son, the envy of the Pharisees who murmured against Christ because He received sinners. For this was the occasion as well as scope of the parable, as is clear from the opening verses of the chapter. Similarly also the parable applies to the Jews, who hated the Apostles and murmured against them, because they preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. So S. Ambrose says, "The Jews envied the Gentiles the paternal blessing," and S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. 33), "He is angry now, and will not go in. But when the fulness of the nations shall have entered in, then the father will go forth that all Israel may be saved." Again S. Ambrose, "He is called the elder because he envied his brother, and envy causes a man very quickly to grow old."

He heard music and dancing. That is, as S. Augustine explains, "He heard the Apostles full of the Holy Spirit preaching the Gospel with harmonious voices. He takes one of the prophets to read, and as he searches in it, asks in a manner, why are these feasts celebrated in the Church at which he finds himself not present." But S. Ambrose says, "He heard the harmony of the Christian people singing with united voice, and raising sweet sounding strains of joy over the salvation of the sinner. But he stands without, for his evil disposition hinders him from entering in;" and the Gloss, "The Church's symphony is the accord of different ages and varying virtues, whence the chorus and spiritual dance of holy and exultant joy."

Tropologically, S. Jerome (*Epist.* 146) says, "Daily is this feast kept, daily does the Father receive His Son, for Christ is ever being crucified for them that believe." See also Salmeron (*Tom.* vii. *Tract.* 27 and 28).

Therefore came his father out and intreated him.—Symbolically, this signifies that God through the preaching of Christ and His Apostles invited the Pharisees and the unbelieving Jews to enter His Church, and therein to partake of the gospel feast, and share in the joy of the faithful. But they refused the invitation from hatred of Christ crucified, and because they were offended that the Gentiles should believe on Him, and they will remain obstinate in their refusal until the coming of Elias at the end of the world. So S. Augustine bids us "admire God's goodness towards His people;" and S. Jerome, "How kind and how merciful a father! He asks his son to share in the joy of the household."

Ver. 29.—*And he answering said, Lo, these many years do I serve thee.* The Syriac has "*servio tibi servitutem*," so the Jews were in bondage to the observance of the law.

Neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment. This answer shows the lying arrogance and the ingratitude of the Jews, who boasted of their work done under the law, and forgot the many benefits which God had conferred upon them. They lie when they say they have never transgressed the commandment of God. They transgress often! For, says St. Jerome (Ep. 146), "Is it not a transgression to envy our brother his salvation?" With like arrogancy, the Pharisee justifies himself, and despises the Publican. St. Luke xviii. 11. But as St. Augustine and the Interlinear point out, the Jews did not bow down to idols, as the Gentiles did, and therefore, inasmuch as they worshipped the one true God, and Him alone, in this particular they did not transgress the commandment.

And yet thou never gavest me a kid. The fathers explain this symbolically in many ways.

"No blood of prophet or priest has delivered us from the Roman yoke, but for the prodigal, *i.e.*, for the Gentiles, for sinners, throughout the whole world, Thy precious blood was shed." St. Jerome (Ep. 146), "Thou hast never, for my sake, ordered a kid, *i.e.* a sinner who persecuted me, to be slain." Theophylact.

"Thou, O Christ, hast never given me Thyself for my food,

because I accounted Thee as a kid, *i.e.*, as a sinner, and a perverter of the Law." St. Augustine.

"The Jews demand a kid: the Christians a lamb. For them Barabbas is set free; for us the lamb is slain." St. Ambrose.

Ver. 30.—*This thy son . . . which hath devoured thy living with harlots.* The Pharisees accuse God of sin, in preferring the unworthy to the worthy, *i.e.*, Gentiles to the Jews, sinners to themselves, as if He had regard to the persons of men; but their accusation is false. For the Gentiles, though sinners, by their repentance and faith made themselves worthy of the gospel and the grace of Christ; but the Pharisees, by their pride, envy, and unbelief, showed themselves unworthy of these benefits. Hence they became reprobate, and the Gentiles were chosen in their stead. See S. Matt. xx. 16.

Ver. 31.—*And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.* "The law, the prophets, the oracles of God," says St. Jerome. To this we must add, the worship of the one true God, and faith in Him, in the teachings of the Church, and the benefits arising therefrom. For all these blessings, which were lacking to the Gentiles before the coming of Christ, were the possession of God's people Israel.

The sense is, "Thou, as my son, art at liberty to enjoy all my possessions, as seems to thee good. Thou oughtest not then to envy thy brother, or to take it amiss that out of our common property, I have ordered a calf to be slain, in honour of his return, especially as thou also art invited to the banquet." St. Ambrose. And the Interlinear adds, "All mine is thine, if so be thou ceasest to envy thy brother," for, says St. Augustine, "desire obtains nothing without want, charity nothing with want, and when we shall have obtained that blessedness, the higher things will be ours to live upon, equal things ours to have fellowship with, the lower things ours to rule;" and he assigns the reason, "for it is thus that all things are looked upon by perfect and immortal children, that each is the possession of all, and all of each." Hence there will arise for the blessed hereafter the perfection of mutual charity and love, and the fulness of glory and of bliss.

Ver. 32.—*It was meet that we should make merry and be glad.* For the most convincing of reasons, because this my son, thy brother, who was dead in trespasses and sins, is now restored to grace and favour, wherefore it behovest thee to take part in our rejoicing, and not to be envious and to murmur against him.

Christ now leaves the Pharisees to apply the parable to themselves. For, says Theophylact, "It is intended to teach that although we may be just, we must not cast off sinners nor murmur because God receives them;" and again, "The Lord speaks as it were after this manner; I beseech you who are righteous and free from reproach, that ye murmur not at the salvation of sons, for this prodigal is still a son."

CHAPTER XVI.

1 *The parable of the unjust steward.* 14 *Christ reproveth the hypocrisy of the covetous Pharisees.* 19 *The rich glutton, and Lazarus the beggar.*

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then he said to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches?*

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13 ¶ No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

16 The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth unto it.

17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery.

19 ¶ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one arose from the dead.

Ver. 1.—*And He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.* Having rebuked in three parables those who murmured because He received penitents, Christ now adds a fourth and fifth on almsgiving and frugality, for the proud and avaricious Pharisees refused both pardon to the penitent, and relief to those who were in want. Gloss.

Unto His disciples, i.e. His hearers, those who were His followers, although they had not given up all, as the Apostles.

A steward, οἰκονόμος, one who had the management of his

master's property, and was answerable for the letting of his land.

Hence we learn "that we are not masters of what we possess, but rather stewards of that which is another's." S. Ambrose and Theophylact.

For although as regards men we are the absolute masters of our own possessions, yet with respect to God, who is Lord over all, we are but stewards. Because, whatever we possess was given us for our own moderate use and for the relief of our poorer brethren, and in the day of judgment we shall have to render a strict account of our stewardship.

So S. Paul says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." 1 Cor. iv. 2. For all our gifts and endowments are not our own, but belong to God who gave them. Hence we are bound to use them not for our own pleasure, but according to His will. Thou hast genius, a keen judgment, a retentive memory, wisdom, eloquence, or the like! Forget not that thou art a steward of these gifts, not a master. Remember that thou hast to give an account of their use, and take heed to use them to the honour and glory of God. Hear S. Chrysostom, "There is an erroneous opinion that all the good things of this life which we possess are our own, and that we are lords over them. But we are as it were guests and strangers, whose departure draweth nigh, and dispensers of another's bounty. We ought therefore to assume the humility and modesty of a steward, for nothing is our own, but all things are the gift of God."

Was accused, διεβλήθη, denounced, Arabic. Hence the devil διάβολος, is called the "accuser" (Rev. xii. 10), because he accuses us before God. "We are accused," says the Interlinear, "not only when we do evil, but when we omit to do good." For a steward ought to omit nothing which concerns his own duty or his master's good.

Had wasted his goods, i.e. by carelessness and riotous living.

Ver. 2.—*And he called him, and said unto him, . . . give an account*

of thy stewardship, i.e. of how much thou hast received and how thou hast expended it, *for thou mayest be no longer steward.*

So Christ saith unto every one in the hour of death, "Give an account of thy stewardship. Give an account of thy life, of thy goods, and of thy talents, whether thou hast used them to promote the glory of God and the salvation of thyself and thy fellow-men."

Climacus relates that a monk, who was afterwards abbot, saw in a dream, the first night he entered the monastery, certain men who demanded of him the payment of one hundred pounds of gold. Whereupon for the space of three years he gave himself up to obedience and mortification, and at the end of that time was told that ten pounds had been subtracted from his debt. For thirteen years longer he continued to practise still greater austerities, and then messengers were sent from God to say that all his debt was forgiven. The same writer has also something terrible to say about the abbot Stephen, who had for forty years lived a holy life of fasting and prayer. This man, the day before he died, fell into a trance, and was heard as if in colloquy with an unseen judge, denying at one time the accusations against him, at another time pleading guilty to the charges, and praying for mercy. Terrible indeed was the spectacle of this invisible and stern judgment.

Ver. 3.—*Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do?* The steward acknowledges the justice of the accusation. He had wasted his master's goods, henceforward he must labour or beg for his living. The one thing he was unable, and the other he was ashamed to do. In his distress, he knows not which way to turn. Truly, St. Chrysostom says, "A slothful life is powerless in action." Symbolically, when life is past, no compunction can, as it were by digging, prepare the soul for fruit; whilst to beg, after the manner of the foolish virgins, is not only disturbing, but vain and useless. Gloss.

Ver. 4.—*I am resolved what to do*, &c. I will give each one of my lord's debtors a bond to show that they owe less than they are actually indebted, so that in return for my kindness and dishonesty, they may entertain me when I am deprived of my stewardship.

Vers. 5 and 6.—*How much owest thou unto my Lord? And he said, an hundred measures of oil.* Greek βάτος in the Vulgate cadus, the tenth part of an homer. Levit. xxvii. 16, and Ezek. xlv. 11.

And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fourscore. Greek γράμμα, *i.e.* "cautio" or bond, or as the Vulgate renders it "obligatio." The meaning is, "Take back thy bond, wherein thou didst acknowledge that thou owest one hundred measures of oil. Tear it up and write another, confessing to a debt of fifty only, and divide the other fifty between me and thee."

Ver. 7.—*Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.* The κόρος which was the same size as the homer, contained ten ephahs. See Ezek. xlv. 11.

"To me," says S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang. Lib.* ii. 34), "the meaning of the passage seems this; that whatever the Jews do for the priests and Levites, should be more liberally provided for in the Church; that whereas they give a tenth, Christians should give a half, as Zaccheus gave, not of his crops, but of his goods; or at least that they should give two tenths, and thus exceed the payments of the Jews."

Ver. 8.—*And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.* The landlord, not the Lord Jesus, as Erasmus holds. The lord praised not the action, for it was dishonest, but the prudence, the cunning craft of the steward, just as we often admire, not indeed a crime, but the cleverness shown in contriving it.

The children of this world are in their generation, i.e. after their kind, in worldly matters, or as Himmel understands it, amongst their fellow-men, *wiser than the children of light, i.e.* than those who are followers of Christ. Very wisely has some one said, "In worldly matters we are philosophers, as to our spiritual affairs, fools; in earthly things we are lynx-eyed, but in heavenly we are moles."

The children of this world, says S. Augustine (*Lib.* ii. *de Genesi*) are wiser in providing for their future; and very naturally so, because the desire of earthly pleasure and enjoyment is strong in man, but

the aspirations of his soul are blunted and weakened, partly because of the body, partly from love of earthly things. Hence those that are led by the flesh are more active and energetic than those who are led by the spirit, inasmuch as spiritual things, being invisible, produce but little effect on the minds of men.

The parable was directed against the avarice of the Pharisees. We are taught by it to use our riches not for our own selfish ends, but for the relief of our poorer brethren. For Christ bids us all remember that we are but stewards of God's good gifts, and therefore bound to use them so that we may give a good account of our stewardship, and obtain our due reward. In this sense the unjust steward is held up as an example, and not because of his injustice and fraud.

Hence S. Augustine, as already referred to, considers that Christ reasons thus, "If this steward could so wisely provide for this life, much more ought we to be solicitous for the life to come." And again, "If this steward, unjust as he proved himself to be, was praised for his wisdom, much more shall we receive praise of God, if by our almsgiving we injure none, but benefit many." And he goes on to say, "If a wrongdoer received praise from his lord, how much more pleasing are they to the Lord God, who do all in accordance with His will. So from the parable of the unjust judge Christ took occasion to speak of God as judge, although between the two no comparison was possible."

We learn then from this parable (1.) That those who are possessed of riches, or any other gift of God, such as health, intellect, and the like, are but stewards of His bounty. (2.) That every one is bound to use his possessions to the honour and glory of God. (3.) And that every one at the day of judgment will have to give account, not only for the sins which he has committed, but also for duties which he has neglected to perform. Such is the general meaning of the parable. Its particular application I will proceed to explain.

Ver. 9. *And* (in like manner) *I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.* Ye have heard how the unjust steward made his lord's debtors so kindly disposed towards

him, that when he was deprived of his stewardship, they were willing to receive him into their houses. In like manner take heed that ye, who have wasted your lord's goods through your misuse of them, by the mammon or the riches of unrighteousness—not by robbery and fraud, but in another sense which I will soon explain—give to the poor, so that after this life is over, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

Here note that the word unrighteousness has a double signification. In the case of the steward it meant dishonesty and deceit: in our case it has a different meaning, as I shall proceed to show.

Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, i.e. of riches, which are "unrighteous" in a fourfold sense and from a fourfold cause.

1. Because riches are often amassed through unrighteousness, *i.e.* through fraud, usury, and the like of oneself or one's ancestors. Hence S. Jerome (Ep. 150) says every rich man is either himself unrighteous or else the heir of an unrighteous man, and although he may not be ignorant of the evil-doings of his ancestors, yet he can scarcely be expected to know to whom restitution should be made. Therefore he is bound to make such restitution as lies in his power, by giving to the poor. And commenting on S. Matt. vi. the same Father goes on to say, Riches are called Mammon because they are acquired through unrighteousness, taking mammon to be derived from מן, min, and מנה, mona, *i.e.* violence, from the root ינה, iana, the meaning being "to exercise force." But the real derivation seems to be from טמן taman, to hide or conceal; for riches and money are wont to be hidden.

2. They are unrighteous in the sense of faithless and deceptive, for they are not to be depended upon, but often desert one man and pass on to another.

3. They are called the mammon of unrighteousness, because in their endeavour to become rich men are guilty of fraud, dishonesty, unrighteous dealing, and every kind of sin.

4. And again, they are unrighteous, because wicked and ungodly men esteem them of more value than the heavenly treasures. S.

Augustine (*serm.* 35 *De Verbis Domini.*) Hence we may understand Christ as saying, "Ye rich and avaricious men have made money your god, but be ye well assured that it is unrighteous, *i.e.* vain and deceptive. Break up your idol, therefore, and give to the poor, and God will recompense you with eternal riches." See S. Matt. vi. 24.

That when ye fail, when life is over and your riches are no longer at your disposal, or according to the Syriac version, when it, *i.e.* mammon, fails you.

They may receive you. The poor, *i.e.* those whom you have made your friends by the right use of your riches. For they, if they are worthy of heaven, will by their prayers and by a communication of their merits make a way for you to enter therein: but if, on the contrary, they are unworthy of so great a blessing, you will be received into heaven because of your almsgiving, for what is given to the poor is accepted of Christ.

Christ seems here to be speaking of the poor who lead godly lives, who are poor as far as earthly possessions are concerned, but rich in understanding and in spiritual grace. Let not the rich then think that they are conferring, but rather that they are receiving benefits from such as these, for they give gold, to receive in return heaven. Hence S. Gregory (Moral. xxii. 14) says, "Almsgiving is not so much the relieving the necessities of the poor as the offering of gifts to those who hereafter will receive us into everlasting habitations."

Learn therefore, that heaven is the inheritance of the poor, not for their own possession, but rather that they may introduce therein those who have been their benefactors. They are therefore the door-keepers of heaven, for "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (see S. Matt. v. 3), and this their blessedness is not of their own deserving, but the special gift of God. So S. Augustine (*lib.* ii. *q.* 38 *Quæst. Evang.*) says, "They receive them not as of right but by the permission of Him who counselled them to make themselves friends, and who deigns to look upon Himself as being fed, clothed, entertained and visited in the person of the least of His followers."

"Everlasting habitations," says Theophylact, "are in Christ

ordained for the poor, wherein they may receive those who have given them liberal alms out of that which God has committed to their trust." Happy indeed is the exchange, for earthly things become heavenly. "Hence almsgiving is the most skilful of arts, for it does not build us an earthly tabernacle, but provides us with eternal life." S. Chrysostom.

Ver. 10.—*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.* By "that which is least" we must understand earthly possessions as distinguished from the "much" of spiritual gifts. That ye may not be deprived of your heavenly stewardship, or rather that ye may be entrusted therewith, take heed rightly to administer your temporal affairs, and especially to give alms to the poor, according to the purpose of God. For so Christ explains His words in the next verse. In a similar sense S. Paul writes, "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. iii. 5.) Christ seems here to be reproaching the Pharisees with unfaithfulness in the disposal of their riches, and in the interpretation of the law, and also with being little worthy of the position they held (see S. Matt. v. and xxiii.), for from ver. 14 it is clear that these things were spoken against them.

Ver. 11.—*If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?* If ye have made a wrong use of this world's fleeting possessions (1 Tim. vi. 7), who will entrust to your care the things which are lasting, and which pertain unto the kingdom of God? Theophylact and many others.

Ver. 12.—*And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?* The wording of this verse is different, but the sense is the same as that of the preceding. The mammon which in the verse above Christ called unrighteous, he here calls "another man's." For temporal possessions are another's:

1. Because they are in their nature totally different from the nature of man. They are of the earth, given to man for his use in this life, to revert again to the earth after death.

2. They are another's as regards God, for we are not absolute masters of what we possess but administrators only, bound to dispose of our goods according to His will. So Titus says, "He describes much riches as that which is another man's, because to abound in riches is, considering human nature, foreign to men. For if any man possesses them, they are external to him, and as it were, an accident." "They are," says S. Ambrose, "foreign to the nature of man, for they have no continuance, they were neither born with us, nor can they follow us when we die." S. Augustine also (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. 35) "He calls earthly endowments another's, for no man can carry them away with him at his death." "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. vi. 7); and Euthymius: "Earthly riches are called another's for they do not remain long with their possessor."

Christ reproves avarice, and shows that he who loves money cannot love God: therefore the Apostles, if they would love Him, must despise riches. S. Jerome. But the better interpretation is one which I am about to give.

That which is your own. "Christ calls heavenly riches ours" says Euthymius, "because, as Theophylact explains, 'our citizenship is in heaven.' For man was created in the image of God, but wealth and earthly possessions are not ours, for there is nothing divine therein. But to enjoy divine blessings, and to partake in the nature of God, is ours."

But you will say, Men are wont to value that which is their own, more than that which is the property of another. Why then does Christ here imply the contrary?

I answer that the force of our Lord's argument is seen: 1. If we look to the meaning of the parable, If ye have not been faithful in earthly things, how will ye be so in heavenly, and who will dare to commit such things to your trust? and 2. From the parable itself. Men are as a rule more careful in their management of the affairs of others than of their own, for many reasons, but chiefly because they are bound in justice to make good any losses which may have been incurred by their carelessness, and if careless may even be

suspected of dishonesty or theft ; whereas for their own losses, or for the mismanagement of their own concerns, they are responsible to no one.

True, therefore, is the argument of Christ, If ye have not been faithful in earthly things, which are another's, God will not give you those heavenly treasures which are rightly your own. For he who makes a wrong use of that which belongs to another deserves to lose that which is his own. For, as Dionysius (Denis) the Carthusian astutely remarks, "In the former verse, Christ spoke of the good things of this life, 'who will trust, or commit,' because an account will have to be rendered of their use. But of the good things of the heavenly country, he says, 'who will give,' for we shall not be called upon to account for these, because once given they are everlastingly our own."

For the following verse, see S. Matt. vi. 24.

Ver. 14.—*And the Pharisees also derided Him,* ἐμυκτήριζον, "turned up their noses," sneered at Him.

Ver. 15.—*And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, i.e.* make outwardly a show of justice, whereas God knoweth your hearts to be full of all uncleanness. For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Your pretended zeal for the service of God, which is held in admiration of the common people, is hateful to Him who seeth the foulness and corruption of your hearts. For my explanation of verses 16 to 19, see S. Matt. xi. 12 ; v. 18 ; and xix. 9.

Ver. 19.—*There was a certain rich man.* You ask, Is this a parable or a true history? I answer, A history!

1. Because Christ does not call it a parable.

2. Because the poor man is named Lazarus, and the rich man, according to a Hebrew tradition quoted by Euthymius, is called a native of Nice.

3. Because the torments of the rich man are related as an actual reality.

4. Because in memory of Lazarus many hospitals for those suffering from leprosy and such like diseases are called by his name.

5. Because with the exception of Justin, Theophylact, and Eucherius, all the Fathers are of my opinion.

Euthymius infers from the mention made of Abraham and Moses, in verses 24 and 31, that this rich man was a Jew, and mentions a Hebrew tradition to the effect that he was living in the time of Christ, who gave his history as that of a well-known man, in order the more to impress his hearers, and to teach them to despise the good things of this present life.

Was clothed in purple and in fine linen. The one denoting luxury and pride, and other softness and effeminacy. There are some, says S. Gregory, who do not think that extravagance in apparel is a sin. But if it were not so, the Word of God would not have so directly stated that Dives, who was tormented in hell, had been clothed in purple and fine linen. No one seeks fine clothing but out of vain-glory, in order to appear better than his fellow-men.

And fared sumptuously every day. The Greek εὐφραινόμενος signifies both gladness and feasting. So Dives, not content with the richness of his banquet, sought to add to the pleasures of the feast the delights of music, dancing, and whatever else could add to his enjoyment. Forgetful of the future, perhaps not believing that there was any future at all, he lived without God, a follower of him who bids men "eat, drink, and enjoy themselves, for death makes an end of all delights." He lived as they live who "take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave" (Job xxi. 12, 13).

Hence S. Gregory teaches that we cannot indulge in revelling without sin. For when the body is given up to the enjoyment of the feast, the heart is led away to empty rejoicing. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (Exod. xxxii. 6).

Conversation generally follows after a feast, for when the appetite is satisfied, the tongue is let loose. Hence Dives is fitly described as desiring water to cool his tongue, for feasting ministers to gluttony, wantonness, pride, evil speaking, envy, and many other vices.

Ver. 20.—*And there was a certain beggar*, a poor man, according

to the Arabic. A beggar, poor in earthly possessions, but rich in virtues and in patience; named Lazarus.

"The mention of the name," says S. Ambrose, "shows this to be a narrative, not a parable;" and S. Cyril tells us, "that according to the tradition of the Jews, there was at that time a certain poor man at Jerusalem, by name Lazarus, apparently so called because he was laid at the rich man's gate to pray for the help which he needed so much."

For Lazarus is in Hebrew לְעָזַר, laazar, "ad adjuvandum." Hence S. Chrysostom and Augustine explain the name as meaning helped, or rather one that ought to be helped, for Lazarus, by drawing attention to his sores, as good as exclaimed, ye see my misery, help me in my wretchedness.

Was laid. ἐβέβλητο, was placed by bearers at the gates of the rich or the entrances of the temples as a breathing corpse, bereft of the power of motion. "He lay," says Titus, "each day and every day in abject misery, neglected, counted as nothing, uncared for, and unprotected." "So that," says S. Chrysostom, "the rich man, as he went out and as he came in, could look upon him, and see his miserable state." "By which things," as S. Gregory teaches (*Hom.* 40), "our Lord has explained His two judgments, the greater condemnation of the unpitying Dives, and the greater acceptance and reward of the suffering Lazarus. For how great," he asks, "do ye suppose were the temptations which the poor and suffering beggar had to resist, when hungry and diseased he saw the rich man enjoying health and the delights of life? When overcome by pain and cold, he beheld him clothed in purple and fine linen and rejoicing in the good things of this life. When brought low by the nature of his ailment, and in need, he saw him in full prosperity, yet regardless of another's wants. What a storm of temptation, may we, my brethren, think there must have been in the heart of the beggar, to whom either ill—poverty or sickness, alone would have been a sufficient punishment! But that he might be the more tried, he was subjected to both evils, and saw, moreover, that whilst the rich man was surrounded by flattering friends and supporters, he had no one to visit him in his misery and want."

Full of sores. Not only poor but diseased ἑλκωμένος, covered with ulcers. Hence many think that Lazarus was a leper, and therefore look upon him as the patron saint of those afflicted with leprosy, who are called Lazars, and their hospitals Lazarettos, after his name.

Ver. 21.—*And dogs came and licked his sores.* Francis Lucas thinks that they did this as if feeding on a dead body, and that they thus caused the poor sufferer much pain, for, S. Chrysostom adds, "he had not the strength to drive them away."

But in another sense the dogs may be considered as cleansing and healing the poor man's sores. Hence S. Chrysostom says, "The wild animals in compassion lick the sores which no one, much less the rich glutton, cared to cleanse. For the rich, unmindful of the condition of their fellowmen, laugh at misery, and turn away from those whom they ought to pity." S. Ambrose.

S. Chrysostom (*hom. De Lazaro*), enumerates nine grievous ills to which the poor man was subjected:

1. A poverty so extreme, that he could not even obtain the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

2. A disease so grievous and so weakening, that he was unable to drive away the dogs which gathered round him.

3. Desertion by all, even those who ought to have aided him.

4. The constant sight of the rich man's happiness, for his bodily pains and his grief of mind were increased by the knowledge, that they who were possessed of every enjoyment had no thought or consideration for him.

5. The hard-heartedness of the rich man, who passed him by, without a kind word or look.

6. His loneliness, for "it is pleasant to have a companion in misfortunes."

7. Uncertainty as to the future, for since the coming of Christ, faith in the resurrection of the dead is a wonderful support in affliction.

8. The long continuance and constancy of his sufferings.

9. The loss of reputation, for many thought that his sufferings were

a direct punishment for some great crime. But, like another Job, he bore all his trials with fortitude and an undaunted mind. Hence, God has set forth Lazarus, Job, Tobias and S. Lydwina, whose sufferings are recorded by Sirius, to be as long as the world lasts examples of patience to all who are sick and afflicted.

Ver. 22.—*And it came to pass that the beggar died*, of disease, misery, and want.

And was carried, i.e. his soul was conducted with honour, for the soul after death needs no actual carrying. Observe here the office of the angels; for S. Chrysostom says, if we need guides, when we are changing from one country to another, how much more shall we need some to lead the way when the disembodied soul is on its passage to futurity. He further adds, "Ye saw the poor man at the rich man's gate: ye see him now in Abraham's bosom; ye saw him surrounded by dogs: ye see him in company of the angels; ye saw him poor, famished, struggling: ye see him happy, filled with good things, and possessed of the prize. Ye saw his labours: ye see his reward."

Into Abraham's bosom. In order that, beholding Lazarus entertained as a guest by Abraham, the rich man might be confounded at his own want of hospitality. Euthymius. Abraham was hospitable: that the sight of Lazarus might rebuke the rich man's want of hospitality. Abraham was wont to watch for wayfarers, to bring them to his house; but the rich man despised him who lay within his gate, and though the poor man was daily ready to his hand, he used him not as a treasure by means of which he might obtain salvation. S. Chrysostom (*hom. De Lazaro.*)

You ask, What is Abraham's bosom, and where situated? S. Augustine (*lib.* iv. *De Anima*) replies, "It is the place of rest in which are received after death the souls of all who are imitators of the faith and piety of Abraham. The place which before Christ was the 'limbus patrum,' but now is heaven, the paradise of the blessed. Hence the Church sings, "Martin rejoices in Abraham's bosom—Martin, here poor and mean, enters heaven abounding in wealth."

And S. Augustine, treating of the death of Nebridius (*Confess. lib.* ix.) says, "He lives in Abraham's bosom, wherever that may be,

there my Nebridius lives." And the Church prays that God will receive the souls of the departed in Abraham's bosom, and give them eternal rest, "as thou hast promised to Abraham and his seed for ever."

It is called Abraham's bosom. 1. Because children rest quiet in the bosom of their parents, and all the faithful are called children of Abraham, who excelled all in faith and holiness. Hence "in the limbus of the fathers" he was chief.

Abraham's bosom, therefore, says Ambrose, is a certain haven of rest, and a sacred retreat.

In the Greek κολπος, in the Latin "sinus," because retired or secret. S. Augustine.

2. Because this blessedness was promised to Abraham and in him to all the faithful. Gen. xxii. 18.

3. Because Abraham was remarkable for his hospitality. Hence it was fitting that the poor and friendless Lazarus, whom the inhospitable rich man had rejected, should be received into his bosom. For, says Chrysologus, the kindness which he showed to God made him chief of the heavenly banquet, and because he received two men with God at an earthly feast (Gen. xviii. 8), he will receive the people of the East and West at a heavenly.

Hence the soul of the poor man was carried, not into Abraham's presence only, but into Abraham's bosom, in order that it might receive comfort and refreshment. S. Chrysostom. And again, Because Lazarus when on earth, was poor and despised, in heaven he became honoured and rich. Thus, solely on account of the ills which he suffered, Lazarus obtained a reward like to that of the Patriarch, and this, not because he had had pity on the poor, or had relieved the oppressed, or had done some good thing, but because he bore patiently all the ills he had to endure.

The rich man also died, and was buried. "The man who had so buried his soul in drunkenness and self-indulgence that it was useless and dead within him," says S. Chrysostom; who goes on to give a touching description of the change which had now come over Dives. "Consider," he says, "the pomp in which he had lived,

the flatterers and friends which were wont to seek his company, and the luxury which had surrounded him: and now all had departed. Everywhere nothing but dust and ashes, lamentation and weeping; no one to help him, no one to call back his soul. Of what avail were his riches, now that he was taken away from all his dependents and left deserted, defenceless, and neglected, left alone to bear in his own person an intolerable punishment?"

In hell, i.e "in purgatory," says James Faber, who thinks that the rich man, after suffering the purgatorial fires, was saved. But others understand here the place of the damned, and hold that the rich man had received his condemnation, an interpretation which is supported by the after narrative, particularly by the 26th verse; and indeed, this is the proper signification of the word "hell," which—in the Greek ᾅδης, from the primative particle α, and ἴδειν, to see—means a place of darkness, where there is neither seeing nor light.

But you will say, We do not read that the rich man sinned, save inasmuch as he fared sumptuously every day, which as a venial sin was deserving of purgatory, but not of hell.

I answer, that although to fare sumptuously is a venial sin, yet if it leads to evil and to excess, especially if it is productive of selfishness and a disregard of the poor, it becomes mortal, and this must happen to him who is a slave to his appetite, for as I have said (ver. 19), a man cannot at the same time serve his belly and his God. The rich man therefore was damned on account of these sins, and chiefly because of his neglect of Lazarus. For he was bound, under peril of committing mortal sin, to minister to the need of the poor man, and since he did not do so, he became liable to the punishment of hell.

"For it is robbery," says S. Chrysostom "to keep what we have received, and to refuse to others a share in our abundance." Again he adds, "the rich man was tormented, not because he was rich, but because he had no compassion." So also S. Gregory of Nyssa.

Hear also S. Hieronymus (*Epist.* 34, *ad Julianum*): "The flames of hell received the purple-clad Dives. But the poor and suffering beggar, whose sores the dogs licked, who scarcely could maintain

himself on the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, is carried into Abraham's bosom, and comforted by the Patriarch with a parent's care. For it is difficult, nay impossible, to enjoy both present and future possessions; to fill here the belly, there the soul; to pass from delights to delights; to be first in both worlds, and to appear glorious both in heaven and on earth."

Hence S. Basil (*serm.* 1, *De Jejunio*) says, "Beware of luxury, for the rich man is tormented, not because of his evil deeds, but because of his self-indulgent life." For they who are indulgent to themselves are harsh and unmerciful to others. They take away what the poor man needs to minister to their own unnecessary enjoyments, as this glutton did, not only from Lazarus, but also from the other poor. For, adds S. Chrysostom, "If he had no pity on him whom time after time, as he went out of his house and returned to it again, he was compelled to see lying at his gate, on whom has he ever had compassion? He therefore was content that they should die of hunger, cold, and disease. So to this very day there are some rich men who are liberal in their banquetings, illiberal to the poor—who spend pounds on one feast alone, but grudge a penny for the relief of those in want. Thus they who always study themselves, neglect others, and consume everything on their own pleasures. For gluttony is a master passion and says, "All is for me, nothing for thee."

He lift up his eyes. The eyes not of his body, but of his mind. God showed the rich man Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, that, says S. Chrysostom, "he might be the more tormented, not only from the nature of his punishment, but also from seeing the estimation in which Lazarus was held. For as the sufferings of Lazarus, when a prey to so many evils, were increased by the sight of the rich man abounding in good things, so now the sight of Lazarus, in his turn comforted, was to Dives an increase of misery." Hence S. Gregory (*hom.* 40) and after him the Gloss says: "We must believe that before the judgment the wicked see the just at rest, and are tormented by their happiness, and also that the just behold the wicked in torment, that their joy may be increased as they look upon the evils from which they have been mercifully preserved."

Ver. 24.—*And he cried*—"cried" because his great punishment evoked a great cry. S. Chrysostom.

And said, Father Abraham. He calls Abraham father, because he was a Jew, and therefore a descendant of Abraham. He did not address Lazarus, says Theophylact, because he was ashamed, and moreover thought that Lazarus was still mindful of the evils he had suffered at his hands.

Send Lazarus. "O miserable man," says S. Chrysostom, "thou art mistaken. Abraham can receive him, he cannot send him! Behold the rich man has now need of the poor man. So when death draws nigh, and the spectacle of life is over, when the marks of riches and of poverty are laid aside, all are judged according to their works, according as they are possessed of true riches, or are poor in the sight of God."

And again, by a sudden change—a change which is graphically described by the prophet (see Isaiah lxv. 13)—the rich man becomes the suppliant of the poor man, and he who was wont to pass by Lazarus as he lay nigh at hand, invokes his aid now that he is afar off.

That he may dip the tip of his finger in water, &c. His tongue, which was inflamed with the desires of gluttony and of boasting, says S. Chrysostom (and of gossiping, adds the Interlinear), now burns with the fires of hell, for wherein that a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished. Wisdom xi. 16.

For I am tormented, &c., by unspeakable torments, both by the flaming fire and a raging thirst.

Hear S. Chrysostom (*serm.* 124): "If thou art surrounded on all sides by the fires of hell, why dost thou desire only the cooling of thy tongue? Because, he answers, the tongue which insulted the poor man, and refused him relief, suffers the more in the fiery torment:" and Salvian adds (*Lib.* iii. *ad. Eccles.*), "How willingly would the rich man have sacrificed all his possessions to obtain release from his endless misery?" Nay more, he would have given up everything for one hour's respite from the flames. Because, can we imagine that he who prayed that Lazarus might

be sent so great a journey to bear but one drop of water, would have begrudged any price to purchase rest?

"Fitly," says S. Augustine (*serm.* 110 *De Tempore*) "did he ask a drop of the man who asked of him a crumb, and inasmuch as he loved riches, he met with no compassion. Ever foolish, too late compassionate, he wished his brethren to be warned—but obtained nothing by his request." And again (*Serm.* 227), "Be warned by the example of the luxurious rich man, whose dogs Lazarus fed by his sores, though he was denied the crumbs which fell from that rich man's table. But after a short time their lots were changed. The poor man, because of his poverty, obtained happiness; the rich man, on account of his riches, punishment. The one is carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, the other consigned to the depths of hell. The whole body of the rich man is consumed by the fire, yet his tongue suffers still greater torment. Doubtlessly because by its proud speaking he had despised the poor man. For the tongue which is unwilling to order the relief of the poor, is subjected to greater suffering hereafter. O rich man, how canst thou ask for a drop of water, when thou wouldest not give a crumb from thy table? Hadst thou been willing to give, thou mightest now with justice make thy request." And again, "By a just judgment in thy turn thou sufferest, for judgment without mercy is the reward of the unmerciful."

And S. Gregory (*hom.* 40): "He who was unwilling to give the suffering beggar the least crumb that fell from his table, in hell was feign to seek, if it were but the least drop of water." And S. Basil says, "The rich man is worthily recompensed: for the tuneful lyre, wailing; for drink, the intense longing for a drop."

You ask, How can the soul of the rich man be said to have a tongue, or the soul of Lazarus a finger; or how can the one feel thirst, and be tormented in the flames, or seek to be relieved by the finger of the other?

1. Tertullian erroneously thinks that the human soul is corporeal, and that it therefore has its tongue, finger, and other members.

2. Hugo Œtherianus supposes that the disembodied soul has the

semblance of a body, like the reflection of any object in a mirror; and John Huartus, a physician, is of the same opinion.

3. But I hold that Christ was here speaking after the manner of a parable, and wished to place before the eyes of his hearers the punishments and rewards which men will receive at the day of judgment, because we only can form an opinion of the punishments of the soul through the punishments of the body; and further, he wished to show that the rich man was punished suitably to his sin.

Some add that the fires of hell produce in the souls of the damned torments, similar to those which they would suffer if they were still in the body. For why should it be thought impossible for God to cause the soul to suffer without the body what it would have suffered if it had continued to be united with the body? Especially as every feeling which affects the soul whilst it is in the body, is of the soul, and not of the body: for it is the soul and not the body which feels, and sees and hears. See 2 Cor. iv. 16. Hence Francis Lucas says, that we are to understand that the soul of the rich man suffered just as if his body had been actually given up to be tormented by the flames, for the soul is afflicted by imaginations derived from the body.

In short, all these things set forth, after the manner of a parable, the extreme misery and torment of the rich man; and also that the blessed are not able to render any aid to the damned, nor indeed have they the wish to do so, inasmuch as they are persuaded that this would be contrary to the fixed purpose of God. Furthermore, the damned do not dare to ask this aid, for they on their part know that they are separated by a great and impassable gulf from those who have entered into rest.

Hence Abraham feels no compassion for the misery of the rich man, because he recognises in his punishment the justice of God. For the sight of the punishment of the wicked does not lessen the happiness of the just, because since they can feel no compassion for the sufferings which they see, their joy will not on this account be diminished. Gloss. And S. Gregory (*hom.* 40) says, The souls of the just, although in the goodness of their nature they feel compassion,

yet after they have been united to the righteousness of their Author, are constrained by such great uprightness as not to be moved with compassion towards the reprobate.

Ver. 25.—*But Abraham said, Son, remember*, &c. "See," says S. Chrysostom, "the kindness of the Patriarch. He calls him son, yet he gives no aid to him, who had deprived himself of cure." "For," adds S. Gregory of Nyssa, "because he had no pity, he is not heard. Neither Abraham nor God has compassion on his prayer."

Remember that thou . . . receivedst thy good things. Thou, when thou wast faring sumptuously, wast unwilling to bestow a thought on Lazarus, or on God, or on heaven or hell; but now call to mind thy feastings, which have led to thy condemnation.

"For," says S. Gregory (*hom.* 40), "to increase his punishment, his knowledge and memory are preserved. He knows Lazarus, whom he had despised, and remembers his brethren whom he had left, that by the sight of the glory of one, whom he had despised, and by anxiety about the punishment of those whom he had loved to no purpose, he would be the more tormented."

Thy good things. Thine, *i.e.* earthly things, which thou didst consider true riches, things for which alone thou didst live in utter neglect of higher concerns. "Evil men," says S. Gregory, "receive in this life good things, for they consider transitory happiness to be their sole joy."

2. Thine, *i.e.* the reward due to thy scanty deserts. "For we are taught," says S. Chrysostom, "that the rich man was rewarded in this world for any good which he had done, and Lazarus punished for any evil which he might have committed. It follows therefore that Lazarus was comforted, because of his patience and goodness, which had not been regarded in this life, and the rich man tormented because of his sin and neglect of God, which had not been punished in this life." "So," S. Gregory says, "the fire of poverty purged the poor man's sins, and this world's fleeting happiness rewarded the rich man for any good which he had done."

3. Thine. Thou in this life didst receive thy portion of good,

therefore there was nothing in store for thee in the future; but Lazarus received evil things, therefore happiness in the next world was his due. For thus God in his justice apportions heavenly blessings to the elect, but earthly benefits to the wicked and those who know Him not. Wherefore, let him who abounds in earthly riches and earthly honour, fear lest he may be deprived of them in the life to come: and let him who has none of these enjoyments in this world, look for them in heaven.

This truth Christ revealed to S. Catherine of Sienna, in a vision of which mention has been already made. (See chap. vi. 24).

Behold an image of eternity, the cross leading to the crown, but pleasure to destruction.

On these words of Abraham, S. Bernard exclaims, "Awake, ye drunken, and weep, for God is fearful in His judgments on the sons of men. Can it be that the rich man was in torment, solely because he received good things in his lifetime? Clearly on this account alone!

"For we may not think that we were cast out of paradise because of God's punishment of sin, in order that the wit of men might prepare for themselves another paradise here upon earth.

"Man was born to labour; if he refuses labour, he frustrates the purpose for which he was brought into the world, and how will he answer him who has ordained labour as the lot of man?"

He presses his argument yet further, and adds, "What shall we say to this? If in the final judgment misery takes the place of rejoicing, are not ills to be preferred to the good things of this life? For it is clear that the one are not really good nor the other actually evil. The truer then is the opinion of Solomon, 'It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting.'" Eccles. vii. 2.

And likewise Lazarus evil things. Sickness, poverty, and its attendant ills, which the worldly-minded consider evils, but which the followers of God account good, inasmuch as they conduce to holiness here, and happiness hereafter. S. Thomas, Chrysostom, and others.

But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. By many a misery, which in thy lifetime thou didst little regard.

Ver. 26.—*And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed.* (Chaos, in the Vulgate). Perhaps the rich man, as an increase to his torment, was shown as in a vision the heavenly abode of the blessed, whither Abraham and Lazarus were to ascend a little after the death of Christ.

Hear S. Cyprian (*De Ascens. Dom.*): "The wicked will for ever dwell amidst devouring fire. There the rich man will burn without any one to cool his tongue with even one drop of water. Every evil lust and passion will have its appropriate punishment, and despair will add to the miseries of the lost. God will then have no pity on the penitent. Too late will be their confession, for when the door is shut, in vain will those who are without oil seek to enter. From thence there is no release. Christ once descended into hell; He will not go thither again. The condemned will not again see God in their dark dwelling. The sentence passed will be irrevocable, the judgment of condemnation stands changeless and fixed for all eternity."

Hence S. Bernard says, "Thou in the midst of hell must be expecting that salvation, which is to be won in the midst of our earthly existence. But how canst thou imagine that thou wilt have in the midst of eternal burnings the power of obtaining pardon, when the time of pardon has passed away? There is no offering for sin for thee, who art dead in sins. The Son of God will not be crucified again. He died, He does not die again. His blood, which was poured out on the earth, does not flow down to hell. All sinners have drunk thereof on earth. There is none which the devils and the wicked who are their companions can claim for the extinguishing of the flames which torment them."

Mystically: S. Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Theophylact understand the gulf to mean the fixed and final separation of the just and unjust. See Rev. xxi., S. Matt. v. 25.

Hence S. Gregory, and after him the Interlinear, says, "Between Dives and Lazarus there is a gulf, because after death no man can change his reward, the damned cannot exchange lots with the blessed, nor the blessed with those who are lost."

"The gulf," says Titus, "indicates the difference between the just

and unjust, for as their desires and wishes were opposed, so now their condition is immutable." "It also," adds S. Augustine (*lib.* ii. *Quæst. Evang.*), "shows to those who are in prison, that by the unchangeableness of the divine sentence, no merciful aid can be rendered to them by the righteous, however much they may wish to give it."

Allegorically. Lazarus lying at the rich man's gate represents Christ, who by the lowliness of His Incarnation condescended to the case of the proud Jews, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, *i.e.*, seeking from them the least works of righteousness, which at their own table, that is, when they had it in their power, they were too proud to perform; which works, although very slight, they would do, not out of the set purpose of a good life, but occasionally and by chance, like as crumbs are wont to fall from the table.

The sores are the sufferings of our Lord, which from weakness of the flesh, He deigned to undergo for us. The dogs are the Gentiles, accounted by the Jews sinners and unclean, who throughout the world softly and devoutly lick the wounds of Christ in the sacrament of His body and blood. Abraham's bosom, the hidden presence of God the Father, into which our Lord was received after His passion. Augustine (*lib.* ii. *Quæst. Evang.*) And again, *symbolically*, he goes on to say: "By the rich man we may understand the proud Jews; the purple and fine linen are the grandeur of the kingdom; the sumptuous feasting is the boasting of the Law; Lazarus, *i.e.* 'assisted,' some Gentile or publican, who is all the more relieved, as he presumes less on the abundance of his resources; the dogs are those most wicked men, who praise the evil works which another groans over and detests in himself; the five brethren are the Jews, bound by the five books of the Law."

In like manner S. Gregory (*Hom.* 40) says, "Lazarus represents the Gentile people. The bursting forth of his sores is the confession of sin. The crumbs were denied him, for the proud Jews disdained to admit the Gentiles to the knowledge of the Law. The dogs are the preachers, who by their teaching, as it were, touch with their

tongue the wounds of the soul. Abraham's bosom, the secret rest, where the rich man sees Lazarus. For the unbelievers see the faithful abiding in rest above them but afar off, because they cannot attain thither by their merits, and they burn in their tongues because they held in their mouth the words of the Law, but kept them not."

And again, "Lazarus represents an apostolic man, poor in speech but rich in faith. The crumbs are the doctrines of the faith. The rich man, some heretic who abounds in eloquent discourses—for all such have a talkative tongue, but a foolish and profitless soul."

Ver. 27.—*Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him,* &c. Probably these words are spoken as the former ones, after the manner of a parable (see verse 24). For it is a very common occurrence in everyday life that those who have met with misfortunes wish to warn their brethren against incurring a similar fate. But of one thing worldly-minded men, who ridicule or else think lightly of the pains of hell, may be assured, no one has ever returned from thence to tell us what their sufferings are.

That thou wouldest send him. Lazarus again in the body, that he, being known to the brethren, and a witness to be seen of all, might move them to faith and penitence. We are taught therefore that the rich man after his death had need of the aid of him whom in his lifetime he had despised.

Touching the appearances of the spirits of the departed, see S. Augustine (*De cura pro mortuis*); Debrius (*in Magicis*); and Peter Thyræus (*De apparitionibus spirituum*).

Ver. 28.—*That he may testify unto them* how grievously I am tormented for my sinful indulgence, and exhort them to repentance and amendment, *lest they also come into this place of torment.*

You will say, that the damned are in utter despair, hating both God and man, cursing everything and every creature, and bearing good will to none—how then could Dives have wished that his brethren might escape the torments of hell? I answer—

1. The damned do not wish to cause anything good, *i.e.* any act of natural or supernatural virtue, nor have they the power to do so on account of their despair, and intense hatred of God and

all good, but they are able to desire some natural good, for example, that it may be well with their parents or brethren. For this reason S. Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Theophylact, think that the rich man, influenced by the ties of kindred and by family affection, really was anxious for the welfare of his brethren, for nature remains the same even in the damned. The action of Dives therefore was one of nature and not of virtue, and had regard, not to actual good, but to natural good only, as the action of animals in nourishing their young.

2. The rich man was anxious for himself more than for his brethren, for he considered their evil his own, inasmuch as their condemnation would increase his torments, because he was the occasion and the cause of their evil lives.

Thus S. Gregory, Lyranus, and others. Cajetan adds, "Dives asked this out of the pride which fills the hearts of the damned, that if not in his own person, at least in the person of his brethren he might be blessed and exalted."

Hence S. Ambrose says, "This rich man too late begins to be a master, for he had neither time for learning nor teaching."

Ver. 29.—*Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the Prophets, i.e.* the writings of Moses and the Prophets, which the Scribes and Pharisees read and expound in their synagogues.

Ver. 30.—*And he said, Nay, Father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.* He is speaking of his own experience. For as he had been affected, so does he think it will be with his brethren. S. Chrysostom. Titus more clearly writes, "Why does the rich man say this but because he himself had heard the prophets to little purpose, and had looked upon their teaching as untrue? Therefore he conjectures that his brethren similarly regarded them. He as much as says, 'They argue as I once argued. Who has ever given any description of hell—who has ever returned thence? But if any one were sent to them from the dead, they would believe him, and give diligent heed to what he had to say.'"

Ver. 31.—*And he said unto him,* &c. They will say that Lazarus

is a phantom, sent by the spirits of evil to deceive; whereas the writings of Moses and the prophets are inspired, are accepted by the Jews at the rule of faith, according to that which is written, "We have now a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." 2 S. Peter 1. 19.

The truth of the Patriarch's answer is proved by the conduct of the Jews, who spoke against the raising of the other Lazarus, and the resurrection of Christ Himself, and refused to believe in Him.

So also Peter, who three years after death was recalled to life by S. Stanislaus, Bishop of Cracow, to testify concerning some land which had been sold by the king, replied to those who asked him concerning the other world, no more than this, "Ye have Moses and the prophets. I have been sent to bear witness, not to preach."

Dives therefore obtained none of his requests, because it is written, "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard." Prov. xxi. 13.

Morally, we learn from this parable or rather from this history,

1. That God has appointed to each his lot, and has made some rich, some poor. Let each one therefore be content with that station which God has allotted him. Let the poor, by patient endurance of want, and the rich, by the liberal relief of the poor, seek for life and happiness in the world to come. For Christ seems to have spoken this parable to enforce His teaching, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations." The rich man was not compassionate, and therefore he was rejected by Abraham and Lazarus.

2. That we must not despise the poor and afflicted, but on the contrary render all the assistance which lies in our power. For S. Gregory (*Hom.* 40) says, "The medicine of poverty heals those whom moral infirmity wounds, and often a pearl lies hidden in a dunghill, *i.e.* holiness and virtue often lie hid in an unclean body, and in abject poverty. And so S. Romula, dying of poverty and paralysis, was carried to heaven by a chorus of angels. He adds,

"We find a Lazarus every day if we seek him, and even if we seek him not, we see him. Behold how importunately the poor present themselves, and make demands on us, in their turn to intercede on our behalf. We ought certainly to ask of them, yet they ask of us. Consider whether we ought to refuse what is demanded of us when those who ask are our patrons."

3. That the rich ought not to boast themselves in their riches, for riches endure but for a time, and death deprives men of their all. Wherefore let them not set their hearts upon their riches, but on God; and let them for the love of God use that wherewith He has prospered them for the benefit of the needy and poor.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Christ teacheth to avoid occasions of offence:* 3 *one to forgive another:* 6 *the power of faith:* 7 *how we are bound to God, and not he to us:* 11 *he healeth ten lepers:* 22 *of the kingdom of God, and the coming of the Son of Man.*

THEN said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe *unto him* through whom they come!

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3 ¶ Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

7 But which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.
19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.
20 ¶ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:
21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.
22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see *it*.
23 And they shall say to you, See here, or, see there; go not after *them*, nor follow *them*.
24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.
25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.
26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.
27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.
28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;
29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodon it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all.
30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.
31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.
32 Remember Lot's wife.
33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.
34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.
35 Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
36 Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

Ver. 5.—*And the Apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith.* The Apostles said this, when, from their little faith, they had been unable to cast out the devil from the lunatic. They then asked for greater faith, as appears from the above words compared with those of S. Matt. xvii. 19, &c., for Christ made the same reply in each place, "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed you would move mountains."

Ver. 6.—*If ye had faith.* "This indeed," says S. Chrysostom,

"is small in quantity but great in power. He means that the least portion of faith can do great things." And Bede, "Perfect faith is a grain of mustard seed: in appearance it is small, in the heart it is fervent."

You would say unto this sycamine tree (a mulberry tree (moro) close at hand, to which Christ pointed). *Be thou rooted up and be thou cast into the sea, and it would have obeyed you.*—For mulberry tree, Matt. xvii. 20 has mountain. Christ therefore said both. It is called the mulberry tree allegorically, as if μώρος (foolish); that is by antithesis, because it is the wisest of trees; not putting forth its leaves till the frost is over, lest they should be cut off. The mulberry signifies the gospel of the cross of Christ, which to the Gentiles appears foolishness, but to the faithful is "the power of God and the wisdom of God," 1. Cor. i. 24. Hence S. Augustine (*Lib.* 11, *Quæst. Evan.: quæst.* 39): "Let those servants speak through the grain of mustard seed, to this mulberry tree; that is, to the gospel of the cross of Christ through the blood-coloured apples hanging like wounds on that tree which is to give food to the nations. Let them say that it is rooted up by the unbelief of the Jews, and transferred to the sea of the Gentiles and planted there, for by this home service they will minister to the hungering and thirsting Lord." So too Bede. "The mulberry tree," he says, "by the blood colour of the fruit and shoots, is the gospel of the cross of Christ, which, through the faith of the Apostles, when it was held as it were in the stem of its kind, was rooted up from the Jews, and planted in the sea of the Gentiles." The Gloss adds, "The leaves of the mulberry, offered to the serpent, bring death upon him, as the word of the cross destroys all hurtful and venomous things of the soul." On the other hand, SS. Ambrose and Chrysostom and the Gloss understand by the mulberry tree, the devil, whom the faith of Christ casts out and sends into hell. 'The fruit of the mulberry tree," says S. Ambrose, "is firstly white, when in flower, when fully blown red, and when ripe it becomes black. The devil also, from the white flower of his angelic nature and power, when cast out by his reddening wickedness, grew horrible from the foul odour of sin. Behold Christ saying to the mulberry

tree, 'Be thou rooted up and cast into the sea;' when He cast the Legion out of the man, He permitted them to enter into the swine which, being driven by the spirit of the devils, cast themselves into the sea."

Hear also S. Chrysostom in the *Catena:* "As the mulberry feeds worms (silk-worms) which spin silk from its leaves, so does the devil, from thoughts springing from those leaves, nourish in us an undying worm; but faith has power to root this tree out of our souls, and to plunge it into hell."

Lastly, the Arabic for the mulberry has "sycamine," or "sycamore," of which, chap. xix. 4. Christ, moreover, exalts the power of faith, that He might implant in the Apostles an additional desire of increasing its keenness, and of praying for its gift to them; for He who gave to men the mind and desire of praying, wished also to increase the faith of those who prayed. Hence He subsequently increased their faith, especially when He sent the Holy Spirit upon them at Pentecost. Hence too, by the strength of their excelling faith, they wrought so great wonders and miracles, converting the whole world; and, lest they should grow proud of such deeds, and become vainglorious, Christ, by the following Parable, teaches them to be humble-minded, and to say, "we are unprofitable servants."

Ver. 7.—*But who is there of you, having a servant ploughing or keeping sheep.* Christ represses the vainglory of the Apostles, lest, when by their exalted faith they had performed wonderful and stupendous acts, they might glory in them and not ascribe to God, whose it is, the honour. "He," says Euthymius, "who attains the result, plucks up the effect of boasting. The servant was not a slave as the heretics say, but one who was hired, and who, in addition to the service agreed upon or ordered by his master, might perform another for him to which he was not bound." Here observe that the heretics abuse this passage to the opposing of good works, but wrongly. For this servant, as clearly appears, truly deserved the daily payment due to him by agreement, but did not deserve that his master should render him thanks; for masters are not accustomed to bestow thanks

upon those whom they pay for their labour. Thanks are only given to assistance rendered gratuitously and without payment. We who are the servants of God, through the works ordered by Him, if we offer them, merit eternal life, as the hired servant who has laboured throughout the day deserves his daily payment. Mark ix. 41; Matt. x. 41; Apoc. xi. 18. For although our works, as far as they are ours, are of little or no value, yet so far as they flow from the grace of Christ, and are therefore the works of Christ, our head, they are of great worth and desert, and do merit, as such, eternal glory; for grace is the seed of glory: especially as God, of His immeasurable goodness, has been pleased to promise to them, as done by the grace of Christ, eternal glory.

Vers. 8, 9.—*And will not rather say unto him.* That is, I suppose, because he does not owe thanks to his servants. "For it is incumbent upon such an one to do his master's will," says Theophylact. "So there is laid upon us," as Bede says, "the necessity of doing all things that God has commanded, and by fresh diligence, of always increasing our former services." The meaning is, as S. Ambrose says, "As we not only do not say to our servant, Take thy repose (recumbe), but require of him a further service, and give him no thanks, so neither does the Lord permit in us one only work, for all while living ought to work always. Acknowledge we ourselves therefore to be servants, lending very many acts of obedience on interest. Nor should we exalt ourselves, because we are called the sons of God. Grace is to be acknowledged, but nature is not to be passed over (ignoranda), nor should we boast ourselves, if we have served well in that which we ought to do. The sun obeys, the moon submits, the angels serve."

Ver. 10.—*Even so ye also.* "Woe unto us if we do it not," says S. Bernard in his fourth sermon on Psalm xv. So the Apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 16, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel," because God has commanded me to do so.

The heretics object, "Christ here calls His faithful, useless servants, therefore by their merits they deserve nothing, nay, they do nothing good, because they contribute nothing useful." I

answer, Their first premiss is false, for Christ does not call His own servants unprofitable, nay, in Matt. xxv. 23, He says, "Well done, good and faithful servant," &c. But He warns each one of the faithful to call himself unprofitable, to the avoidance of vainglory, and to the greater increase of humility and equally so of their merit, as say SS. Ambrose, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Bede, and others, *passim;* and that, in a sense not false and pretended but true and sincere. Because the faithful servant, in merely fulfilling the precepts of God, does nothing peculiar or remarkable, but only that which by the law of God he ought to do, and to which he was bound under the penalty of sin. He therefore both is, and is called, unprofitable, because he has fulfilled the commandments alone, but has omitted the counsels and works of supererogation, as Christ Himself explains: "All things that are commanded," and "what we ought to do we have done." He therefore gains only the ordinary reward of such observance of His commands; but to that exceptional glory, and crown, and aureole of the observance of the Evangelical counsels he does not attain; as says S. Paul, whose words I will shortly cite. Again, says S. Chrysostom, "When we say, with humility, we are unprofitable servants," Christ says, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

S. Bernard again, in his treatise *de Præcept et Dispens.*, thus explains the matter, "We are unprofitable servants, we have done what we ought;" *i.e.* If you are content with the mere precept and traditions of the law, and do not give yourselves up to the counsels and persuasions of perfection, you are free indeed from debt, but you are not praiseworthy for merit; you have escaped punishment, you have not gained the crown.

It is this which S. Paul, when preaching the Gospel freely, and when he might have required food from the faithful, 1 Cor. ix. 15, calls his glory.

Secondly, Even S. Paul himself, the other Apostles, and the Religious, in observing not only the precepts but also the counsels of Christ, can truly say, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done what we ought to do." Firstly, because we owe to God our souls, our bodies, our lives, and all that we have, which, whatever good we

do, we can never pay back. This debt is infinite and manifold, but it is especially fourfold. First, there is the debt of creation, for as we were created out of nothing by God, the whole that we are we owe to God our Creator. Thus Plato in his Phædo, "Man is one of the possessions of God." "Behold," says S. Bernard on "Our Fourfold Debt," "He is at the door who made the heavens and the earth. He is thy Creator, and thou art His creature: thou art the end of His work." The second is the debt of emption and redemption, for Christ redeemed us from death and hell at the price of His own blood. We are therefore slaves of purchase, nay, "the purchased servants of Christ," 1 Cor. vi. 20. S. Bernard, in the sermon already cited: "Firstly, we owe all our lives to Christ Jesus, for He laid down His life for us, and endured bitter torments, that we might not have to undergo eternal ones." He sums up thus: "When I give to Him all that I am, all that I can do, is not this as a star to the sun, a drop to the river, a stone to the mountain, a grain to the heap?" So in his tract, *De Deo dilig.*: "If I owe my whole self for my first creation, what shall I add for my second, and that brought about as it was? For a second creation is not effected as easily as a first. He who made me once and only by a word, in creating me a second time spoke many words and did wonderful things and endured hard things, and not only hard but even undeserved things. In the first creation He gave me to myself, in the second He gave Himself to me, and when He gave Himself to me He restored me to myself. Given, then, and restored, I owe myself for myself, and I have a double debt. What reward shall I give to God for Himself, for if I were to weigh myself a thousand times, what am I to God?"

The third debt is, that renouncing Satan in our baptism we have given ourselves wholly over to the obedience of Christ; He in regenerating us in Himself has made us new men, and divine, who are the Temple of God and of the Holy Ghost.

The fourth is that He is our beginning and final end, and He to whom we ought to direct all our actions. For He has promised us the happiness of heaven, and everlasting glory, which is nothing else than the vision and fruition of God. See Jerome (*Platus*, Book I.,

On the Grace of a Religious State, chapters iii. iv.), where he recounts seven titles of our service, on account of which we are not of our own right, but are God's and Christ's.

To these add that we are unprofitable servants in respect of God; for, to God, who is immense, most rich, and most blessed, we can add no good thing. Hence S. Augustine on Psalm xxxix.: "He possesses thee that thou mayest possess Him. Thou wilt be His land, Thou wilt be His house. He possesses thee, He is possessed by thee, that He may profit thee. Canst thou profit Him in any way? For I said to the Lord, 'Thou art my God, therefore shall I want no good thing.'"

Again, we are unprofitable, because we sin in many things, and many of our words are infected by negligence or vainglory or some other fault. In addition to this, our actions, if looked upon with strictness, as they proceed from men, are without value to the meriting of the grace and glory of God: according to the Apostle, Rom. viii. 18. So S. Augustine, whose words I will shortly produce. Lastly, all our actions derive the dignity of worth and merit from the grace and promise of God, and are useful to ourselves, not to Him. Hence the Arabic reads, "We are indeed useless servants, for we have done that which was our interest to do." So Euthymius, S. Cyril in the *Catena*, and others.

And thus did those monks of the Alps to whom S. Bernard wrote his 152d Epistle; "You account yourselves unprofitable, and you have been found to be humble. To act rightly, and yet to think themselves without value, is found in few, and therefore many admire it. This I say, this assuredly makes you, from illustrious, even more illustrious; from holy, more holy; and wherever this report is published it fills all things with the odour of sweetness;" for, as the same author says in his 42d Sermon on Canticles, "Humility, like the ointment of spikenard, scatters its sweet scent, growing warm in love, flourishing in devotion, smelling pleasantly to the senses of others."

S. Augustine indeed, for useless servants (inutiles) reads supervacui, men at leisure, who after their labour look for repose; that

eternal reward and glory which far surpass and exceed all their toil. "Nothing remains for us to do: we have finished our trial, there awaits us a crown of righteousness. We may say all things of that ineffable perfruition, and the more all things can be said the less can anything be said worthily; for it is the light of the illuminator, the repose of the toiler, the country of the returned wanderer, the food of the needy, the crown of the conqueror, whatever the temporal goods of unbelievers the holiness of the sons of God will find others more true, and such as will remain in the Creator to all eternity." Hence the conclusion of Theophylact, "If when we have done all things, we ought not even then to have any lofty thoughts; how deeply do we sin when we do not perform the greatest part of the commandments of God, and yet are praised not the less."

Ver. 11.—*And it came to pass as He was going up to Jerusalem* from the borders of Cæsarea Philippi or Paneas, as is clear from S. Matt. xvii. 22, to Jerusalem; to the feast of tabernacles, as appears from S. John vii. 2. He went through the midst of Samaria and Galilee; for this was the direct road for one journeying from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. Mention is made of Samaria to suggest a reason why, among the ten lepers that were healed by Christ, one was a Samaritan; namely, that as Christ was going through Samaria, although He had been inhospitably received by the Samaritans, nay, shut out from one of their towns, ix. 53, He yet wished to do good to a Samaritan, that He might return kindness for ill-treatment. See the chronological order of events which I have prefixed to this commentary.

Ver. 12.—*And as He entered into a certain village.* Lepers, as being unclean, were not able to enter cities, towns and villages, lest they should communicate their leprosy to the inhabitants, as well as their legal defilement, which under the old law was communicated by contact with a leprous and unclean person; as in Numb. v. 2. Hence they met Christ before the village.

There were ten lepers, says Euthymius, whom their disease had united together; for otherwise the Jews hold no communication with the Samaritans, John iv. 9. These ten lepers seem to have agreed,

as soon as they met Jesus, to demand to be healed with one voice. They made an attack upon the clemency of Jesus.

They stood afar off, as being unclean and out of communion with the clean, being banished lest they should affect them by their breath. In figure leprosy is concupiscence, heresy, and every kind of sin, as is shown in Levit. xiii. xiv. and Matt. viii. 2.

Ver. 13.—*And they lifted up their voices.* They cried out aloud, because they stood afar off. The voice was one and proceeded from all, "Jesus, Master," have mercy on us, and free us from this heavy and incurable disease. Master here does not so much mean teacher as Lord, one who directs his servants and tells them his wishes. The Greek is ἐπίστατα, that is Præfect—Præses; one whose right it is to rule and command: for they do not ask Christ to teach them, and give them precepts of virtue, but to command the leprosy and cause it to depart from them. So the Hebrew, Rabbi, means not only master but also Lord, and Mighty, and One of the first rank. Moreover, S. Luke everywhere calls Christ ἐπίστατα, as is seen v. 5, viii. 24, 45, ix. 33, 49; S. Matt. also, viii. 25, xvii. 4, and elsewhere, has κύριε, that is Lord. So the Gauls, Germans, and Belgians call their masters Lords, Domini, mon maistre, mein meister.

And when He saw them He said unto them. Theophylact says, "They stood afar off indeed in position, but they were near in speech, for 'The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon Him,'" Ps. cxlv. 18.

Ver. 14.—*He said unto them, Go and shew yourselves unto the priests.* That is, if you go to them and obey Me, you shall assuredly be healed of your leprosy by My power and providence.

And it came to pass, as they went. Christ commanded them to go to the priests, not that they might be healed by them, for this was impossible, but firstly, for the honour and deference due to the priesthood; secondly, because the law commanded lepers, if they were healed, to show themselves to the priests, that by their means they might be brought back to the city and temple, and to the society of men. The priests, moreover, had their own signs by which they might know whether a man were a leper or not, as I have shown

before. Thirdly, to prove the faith and obedience of the lepers, for they knew themselves to be lepers, and that they could not be healed by the priests, but only that their leprosy could be declared. Yet they went to them at the command of Christ, believing that they would thus be healed by Him before they came to the priests. For if they had not so believed they would assuredly not have gone to them. Fourthly, that Christ might make the priests witnesses of the miraculous healing done by Him, and that from this they might know that He was the Christ.

Allegorically. Christ wished to signify that mystical lepers, that is sinners in the New Law, ought to come to the priests that they may be healed by penance, and absolved from the leprosy of sin. "It is not," says S. Chrysostom, "the duty of the priest, under the New Law, to prove the leprosy, as it was under the Old, but to cleanse and expiate it when proved." *Lib.* iii. *de Sacerdotio.*

And as they went, they were cleansed. "In certain faith and blind obedience, not judging of the command," says Euthymius. It is probable that immediately on their going they were healed, that they might know it to have been done by Jesus. Hence the Samaritan, perceiving what had happened, and that he was cured, returned to Jesus and gave thanks. Thus is God wont to reward prompt faith and obedience.

They were cleansed. From their leprosy, which among the Jews was the greatest of uncleannesses, both natural and legal; especially because it was contagious, and made those who came near, leprous and unclean.

Ver. 15.—*And one of them, when he saw that he was healed.* He left the road and went back to Jesus, the Author of his healing, magnifying God with a loud voice, who, through Jesus, had healed him.

Ver. 16.—*And fell down on his face at His feet.* That by profound humiliation he might show his great reverence to Him, as in the Greek and Syriac. *And he was a Samaritan:* a Samaritan, and therefore an alien from and abhorrent to the Jews, a schismatic moreover, so that it was wonderful that he alone gave thanks so earnestly to Jesus,

who was a Jew, when the other lepers, who were Jews by nation and religion, passed Him by and gave no thanks for so great a benefit.

Ver. 17.—*And Jesus answering said,* Why do not the nine, equally with this Samaritan, return and acknowledge their cure, and give Me thanks? In truth the nine were rejoiced at their cure, and went to the priests, that they might be declared to be clean, and restored to the society of men, thinking wholly of themselves, and caring very little for the glory of Jesus.

Ver. 18.—*There are not found that returned.* By confessing and declaring themselves cured by God through Christ of their leprosy, which was a great glory to God.

Save this stranger. That is, except this Samaritan, who was a stranger to the nation and religion of the Jews. For the Samaritans were Babylonians, Assyrians and Medians, and were transferred by Shalmanezer to Samaria. 2 Kings xvii. 24. The Syriac says, "Why were they separated, so that none gave glory to God except this one?" He represents the Gentiles, who were to believe in Christ, and give Him thanks, when the unbelieving Jews would hold Him in contempt. We thus see that strangers are often more grateful than natives; because strangers wonder at strange benefactors more, and pay them greater respect than natives, who, as familiar with their benefactors, think that benefits are their due from the right of country. Moreover, they were ashamed to humble themselves before their own countrymen, and to acknowledge the misery from which they had been delivered. Rightly therefore does Christ blame them; and He might with justice have deprived them of the benefit of the cure, and allowed them to fall back again into their leprosy. But He would not do this, because His mercy was so great that it extended even to the ungrateful. S. Bernard sharply rebukes the wickedness of ingratitude, Serm. li. on Canticles. He says, "It is the enemy of our souls, the inanition of our merits, the disperser of our virtues, the ruin of our benefactions. Ingratitude is a burning wind, drying up the Fountain of Holiness, the dew of mercy, the streams of grace."

Ver. 19.—*And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith.* Faith,

by which you have believed that I am able to save you, nay that I will do so, if you obey Me, and go to the priests. For this faith has worked with your healing, even though I be the primary author. Hence very likely the prompting of God elicited from this leper some act of contrition by which he was justified; and that he then left the schism of the Samaritans, and joined the true religion of the Jews. In the end he became a disciple of Jesus, and received His baptism, and became a Christian and preached the power and miracle of Christ and converted many to Him.

Ver. 20.—*And when He was demanded of the Pharisees.* The kingdom of Israel, which had now indeed fallen, but which was to be raised up again by the Messiah.

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. "Cometh," that is, will come. It is a Hebraism, in which the present is put for the future. Observe that Christ said, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." This Pharisee, therefore, either from a desire of knowledge, or to mock Jesus, said, "Thou Jesus preachest Thy kingdom in heaven, but when will it come? When shall we see Thee reigning in it? When shall we see Israel, who is now subjugated by the Romans, breathe again through Thy means and recover her liberty and live happily under Thee as her king?" "They asked Him when He would reign," says Euthymius, "as to deride Him, who appeared as one of low estate." But Christ answered mildly and briefly at first as in this verse, but afterwards at more length (verse 22 to the end of the chapter). He spoke of the glory of His kingdom in the heavens, to which that of grace should first be subordinated on earth, for we proceed to glory through grace. He said therefore,

The kingdom of God. The kingdom of God and the Messiah cometh not with previous preparation, nor with the outward pomp of soldiers, horses, and chariots, as you can see, from itself. You know a king to be at hand when you see his attendants preceding him. With such as these you thought that the kingdom of the Messiah would come, and you look for it as now nigh at hand.

Ver. 21.—*Neither shall they say.* They shall not say, In Jerusalem is

the royal throne of Christ, He reigns there in magnificence like another Solomon; because Christ does not reign on a bodily throne, but in a spiritual soul, which by His grace He rules and directs into all good, and so guides it to the kingdom of heaven. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. I would understand all these sayings of the same thing: that is, of the first Advent of Christ, in which He reigns in the souls of the faithful as a king through His grace; for thus do His sayings, as a whole, best agree together and cohere. Some, however, understand the kingdom of glory, because He will adorn even the bodies of the just with His own brightness, and other gifts, as all may see.

Secondly, This kingdom of God is within us: that is, it is in our own power if we embrace the faith and grace of Christ, and work with Him, for, as Titus says, "It is of our own will and power to receive the kingdom of God."

Thirdly, The kingdom of God is within us, because Christ, as our God and king, lives among us preaching and endowing this kingdom. Thus speaks Theophylact: "The kingdom of God on the whole is to live after the manner of the angels, when nothing of this world occupies our souls. We need no long time and no distant journey, for faith is near us, and after faith the divine life." The same also said the Apostle, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith," Rom. x. 8. For to believe, and to walk worthily of our belief and of our calling, is within us. The Pharisees therefore derided the Lord, but He turned them into ridicule, showing that they were ignorant of that which was within them and which is very easy to any one who wishes for it. "For now when I am in the midst of you, you are able to possess the kingdom of God if you believe in Me and will live according to My commandments."

Ver. 22.—*And He said unto His disciples, The days will come.* That is, the time will come and is now at hand, when for My faith and the preaching of the gospel you will suffer many adversities, persecutions, and distresses; the errors and heresies, moreover, of the

innovators; and be oppressed by straits of body and mind, and know not what consolation or counsel to take. Hence you shall seek to see Me, and to consult Me, if only once, but in vain: for after I shall have ascended into heaven, I shall no more appear on earth. Thus the things you now hear from Me you ought to teach, and to console, and to direct, until, at my second coming to judgment, I return to you, that is, to your successors. Thus He spoke to warn them that they could only come to the kingdom of glory through tribulations, that they might neither fail in heart nor fall from the faith. So Theophylact, Euthymius, Titus, Bede, and others.

Ver. 23.—*And they shall say to you.* False prophets shall come feigning themselves to be Christ or sent from Christ. Go not out, neither follow those deceivers or their rumours. The Arabic has, "See them not, nor hasten to them."

Ver. 24.—*For as the lightning.* The Syriac has, "As the lightning shines from heaven and lightens all things under heaven." As the lightning most suddenly, swiftly, and openly descends from heaven and shines out, so shall I suddenly and unexpectedly return to judgment. There will be no need of watching for Me, or sign, or mark, for I shall appear conspicuous and glorious to all in the whole earth. This and the following we have read in Matt. xxiv. 27 and following, where I have explained it.

Ver. 25.—*But first must He suffer many things.* The Arabic has, "Before this He shall endure much suffering, and be rejected by this generation."—"That is," says Euthymius, "by this nation of a few Jews. He said this firstly, lest the Apostles, seeing Him suffering and being put to death on the cross, should be offended, and doubt whether He were the Christ." Secondly, as Bede says, "that when they saw Him dying, who, they thought should be glorified, the pain of His sufferings might be lightened to them by the hope of the promised glory." Thirdly, that He might arm them against future sufferings by this prophecy. "As if He had said," says Theophylact, "Wonder not if troubles come upon you, so great as to make you wish for the days when I was with you. For even I myself, who will come as the lightning, must first suffer many things, and

be rejected, and so come into that glory. Let this be your example, for to you also shall come glory from perils."

Ver. 30.—*Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.* "Well does Christ say," says Bede, "that He shall be revealed as one who, not being seen, sees all things, and then appearing, shall judge all things."

Ver. 32.—*Remember Lot's wife.* She perished because she looked back. "Lest," says S. Ambrose, "as she looked back on the burning Sodom, against the command of the angel, and was changed into a pillar of salt, so you also, against these commandments of mine, may return to the life of the world, and perish with that which is perishing and burning." S. Augustine (*Lib* ii. *Quæst. Evang. quæst.* 43): "What is the meaning of Lot's wife? She represents those who look back in tribulation and separate themselves from the hope of the Divine Promise, and who are therefore changed into a pillar of salt, that by admonishing men not to do the same, they may, as it were, season their hearts, and not become fools."

Ver. 34.—*In that night there shall be two men in one bed.* By the word night it may be thought that the universal judgment of Christ will take place at night, for the greater terror of men. But I reply, That which in verse 31 is called day, is here called night. First, Because the day of judgment will be to very many, and certainly to all who have fallen away, fatal and most calamitous. For night and darkness are symbols of calamity. Secondly, As night closes the day and the time of labour, so will that day also close the time of labouring and meriting, according to the words, "The night cometh when no man can work." John ix. 4. Rightly then is the day of judgment called night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

3 *Of the importunate widow.* 9 *Of the Pharisee and the publican.* 15 *Children brought to Christ.* 18 *A ruler that would follow Christ, but is hindered by his riches.* 28 *The reward of them that leave all for his sake.* 31 *He foresheweth his death,* 35 *and restoreth a blind man to his sight.*

AND he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none *is* good, save one, *that is*, God.

20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they that heard *it* said, Who then can be saved?

27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

31 Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

33 And they shall scourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

35 ¶ And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God.

Ver. 1.—*And He spake a parable unto them to the end that.* Christ had said, at the end of the last chapter, that the Apostles and

the faithful should suffer persecutions, in which they should wish for His presence that they might seek and receive help from Him. He now names a remedy for all their sufferings, prayer, for He both hears them and grants what they ask, for He teaches, directs, strengthens.

Always to pray. Hence the heretics called Euchitæ wished, but without reason, to be always praying and to do no manual work. But it is written, "If any man will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. iii. 10). "Always" here seems to mean sedulously, perseveringly, diligently, assiduously as in other things, and at befitting times, especially when temptation, persecution, and affliction are hard at hand. It is impossible for us to pray always and at all times. We must have a time for eating, drinking, labouring, &c. The word "always" means, therefore, not continuance but perseverance in prayer: that is, that we should set apart fit times for prayer, and not cease to pray until we have obtained what we need and what we ask for. Our Lord adds, "and not to faint" or in the Greek "be weary." The reason is that we daily meet so many difficulties and troubles that our whole lives appear to be one temptation and warfare. And as we are infirm and unable to overcome them we ought to ask help and strength from God through prayer. Thus our whole Christian life seems as it were one prayer. Again, "always," that is frequently, at the hours appointed by the Church, that we may do nothing without prayer—nothing that we do not ascribe to the glory of God. Bede says, *mystically*, "He prays always who works for God always;" and the Gloss, "He prays always who lives virtuously always." S. Chrysostom: "The Lord would have you to obtain by prayer that which He wishes to give you. The palace and the ears of princes are open to few. The ears of God are open to all who will." He refers to Ecclus. xxxv. 20. So the apostle, Ephes. vi. 18; 1 Thess. v. 17. See what I have said on those three passages, Climachus: Gradu xxviii.: "Prayer, if we regard its nature or quality, is the familiar conversation and union of man with God, but if we consider its force and efficacy it is the conservation of the world, our reconciliation with God, the mother, at once, and daughter of tears, the propitiation of sins, the bridge of

escape from temptation, the bulwark against the attacks of afflictions, the destruction of war, the office of angels, the food of all spirits—future joy, continual action, the fountain of virtues, the reconciler and authoress of divine graces." Not content, he speaks more highly, exaltedly, nobly still: "It is spiritual progress, the food of the soul, the illumination of the mind, the axe of despair, the demonstration of hope, the distinction of sorrow, the wealth of monks, the treasure of solitaries, the decreasing of anger, the mirror of religious growth, the index of our stature, the declaration of our condition, the signification of things future, the proof of the glory to come." So the Church sings of S. Cæcilia: She always bore the evangel of Christ in her bosom, and neither by day nor by night did she cease from divine conversation and prayer, and when the organs sounded Cæcilia sang to the Lord, "Cleanse thou my heart, that I may not be confounded." Valerian her husband found her on her bed praying, with an angel. By this increasing prayer she merited to be given to the angel for the preservation of her virginity, the conversion of her espoused husband Valerian, of Tiburtius and 400 others, and lastly a glorious martyrdom with them all.

Ver. 2.—*Saying there was in a city a judge which feared not God.* This judge was wicked, unjust, cruel, and godless, one who feared neither the vengeance of God, nor the ill-report of men, who cared nothing for his conscience or his character. For the wicked who have no fear of God are often deterred by the shame of men, from confessing those acts for which they are openly despised and considered godless and infamous. But this judge was moved by no fear of God or man, and therefore he had arrived, says Theophylact, at the summit of all wickedness.

Ver. 3.—*And there was a widow in that city.* Avenge me, that is, vindicate my right against my oppressor, and free my innocence; righteousness, substance, and character, which are brought to trial by my enemy who is powerful, and against whom I cannot stand. She did not ask for vengeance but only for justice, that she might be delivered from the violence of her adversary and get back her own.

Ver. 4.—*And he would not for a while.* Partly from his own

wickedness and partly because he hoped for a great bribe from the opponent.

But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, i.e., Although I am unjust and without scruple or shame, yet because this widow is troublesome to me, I will avenge her of her adversary, and give her back her right, lest continually (in novissimo) coming she weary me out (sugillet me). The Syriac has "omni tempore;" the Arabic "semper." Sugillo is properly to bruise the face and make it livid by blows. The Greek is ὑποπιάζω. The metaphorical meaning is, firstly, to deafen the head and ears with noise, and many so understand it. The Syriac has, "Lest she continually trouble me." The Arabic, "Lest she be always coming to trouble me." S. Augustine (*Ep.* 121 *to Proba*): "She moved the unjust judge by her persistence to listen to her. Not that he was influenced by justice or mercy, but he was overcome by weariness." So Bede, Euthymius, Lucas and others from the Greek. "As therefore this widow by the assiduity and importunity of her supplications conquered the judge, so do we overcome God. What fear cannot effect prayer can. Threats and the fear of punishment have not moved men to justice; but when the widow came as a suppliant, from a savage she made the judge humane. What then may we not conjecture of a beneficent God, if the widow by her prayers changed a judge who had been cruel before, into a humane one?' S. Chrysostom adds that Christ here wishes to show that the chief strength of prayer consists in turning unjust and cruel judges to piety and mercy. Sugillare, applied from the body to the mind, means to brand with a mark, to affect with disgrace, to accuse. Although this senseless judge regarded neither God nor man, he feared for himself and his office, lest he should be deposed from his judgeship, and deprived of honour and profit; he therefore gave the widow her due.

Allegorically, S. Augustine (*Lib.* ii. *Quæst. Evangel. qu.* 45), says, "The widow is the Church, which seems desolate until her bridegroom Christ, who now bears her griefs in secret, return from heaven to judgment."

In trope, "The widow," says Theophylact, "is the soul which has put away her former husband. He was hostile to her because she came to God. God is a judge Who fears no one, and regards not the persons of men. The widow represents every soul that is desolate and afflicted, and who prays to the judge, that is God, to be delivered from her adversary. But because it is incongruous to compare God to the unjust and wicked judge, as Euthymius rightly says, from S. Chrysostom, we should rather say that it is Christ who is here spoken of; and not in comparison but as concluding from the less to the greater. That is: If the unjust judge were overcome by the importunity of the widow to change injustice into justice, and give her her rights, how much rather should God do this, who is most just, nay who is justice itself, punishing all injustice?" So S. Augustine above—S. Chrysostom and Theophylact—as will be clearly shown on verse 7.

Vers. 6, 7.—*And the Lord said, Hear what the*, &c. "God," says Theophylact, "is the leader, the judge and the vindicator of all righteousness." So David on Psalm xxxiv. 17, "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth." The Arabic has, "Hear what the unjust judge said; and shall not God more rightly avenge His own elect, who cry to Him day and night?" So Ecclus. xxxv. 21, 22; Rev. vi. 9, 10, where the souls of the slain for Christ cry to God demanding vengeance. They hear from Him that they must rest yet a little while until the number of their fellow servants is completed. See what I have commented on the place.

Morally. Behold how great is the dignity, the need, and the power of prayer. The need, that by it we may be delivered from all the temptations and tribulations by which we are every where, and always, surrounded. The dignity, because by means of prayer we converse with God, as do the angels. The power, because by it we overcome all adversities and hardships. "To pray always," says S. Chrysostom (Book ii. of Prayer) "is the work of angels, who, wholly intent upon God, teach us while we pray to forget our human nature, and to have no regard to things present, but to conceive of ourselves as standing in the midst of angels, and performing the same sacrifice with them." He adds, "Satan does not venture to come too near

to a soul fortified by prayer, for he fears the strength and fortitude which prayer confers. Prayer supports the soul more than food supports the body." And (Book i.), "As the sun gives light to the body, so does prayer to the soul. If it be a loss to a blind man not to see the sun, how much greater a loss is it to a Christian not to pray assiduously, nor to introduce the light of Christ into his soul by prayer! By it we attain to this end, that we cease to be mortal and of time. By nature we are mortal, but by prayer and our life with God, we pass to the life immortal. For it is inevitable that he who holds communion with God, should come out superior to death and to all that is subject to corruption."

Ver. 8.—*When the Son of man cometh.* He comes to the universal judgment, when He will deliver His elect, whom He ordered to be always ready and eager; and to await that day patiently, preparing themselves for it by prayer and good works. For that day will be sudden and unexpected like lightning, as He Himself has said (chap. xvii. 24). Christ gives the reason why we should always pray, and persevere in prayer; because from His long absence, faith will fail even in many who believe, so that they will either lose all faith or believe very feebly, scarcely thinking that He will return at all. Secondly, Christ here gives the reason why many are not heard in prayer. Their faith begins to fail and they do not continue steadfast in prayer, nor await the coming of the Lord with patience as they ought.

Thirdly, Theophylact says, "He rightly connected His words on prayer with those on faith, for the base and foundation of all prayer is faith. He declared at the same time that few would pray, for faith would be found in few."

Christ says this to add a fresh incentive to unceasing prayer, for by degrees faith is failing more and more, and offences and persecutions are therefore increasing.

Shall He find faith—perfect faith, that is; faith formed by certain confidence (fiducia) and love. "This," says S. Augustine (*tract* xxxvi.), "is scarcely found on earth, for the Church of the faithful is full of imperfect faith, and is, as it were, half dead." Christ Himself explains it so, S. Matt. xxiv. 12.

This will happen more especially; at the end of the world before the coming of Christ to judgment, when men shall eat and drink themselves over to pleasure and think not of the judgment, as Christ said, chap. xvii. 27; and S. Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 3. That is, Christians will deny that He is coming to judgment, even when that coming is near at hand (2 Peter iii. 4). As if they had said, "Nature has made the world: the same Nature continues its course in the same tenor, and always will continue it. There is no God to destroy it: no Deity to judge us and our works, and to punish them."

Ver. 9.—*And He spake also this parable unto certain that trusted in themselves.* Which, however, might truly happen, nay often has happened, so that it may be historical. The introduction to the parable shows its scope and the design of its introduction, namely, to rebuke the supremacy of the Pharisees, and their boasting and contempt of other men.

In the former parable Christ taught one condition of prayer—perseverance. In this He teaches another—humility, for the humble prayer is heard by God, the proud one is rejected, as Ecclus. xxxv. 21. See what has been said thereon. The Fathers thus connect these words with the preceding verse, that is with faith. S. Augustine (*Serm.* xxxvi.), on the words of the Lord that faith is not of the proud but of the humble, says, "Christ subjoins a parable on humility as opposed to pride:" Theophylact, "Because pride more than other feelings vexes the minds of men, He very frequently speaks of it:" The Gloss, "That no one, from what has been said, may flatter himself on his knowledge, or his confession of faith," Christ shows that our works, and not our professions, will be judged by God, and amongst these He chiefly notes humility.

Ver. 10.—*Two men went up.* The one a Pharisee, with the pharisaical pride, puffed up and haughty. The other a publican, that is a sinner, and deprecating pardon. Publicans were held infamous by the Jews, nay, were termed Parisim—that is, public robbers, for, as Suidas says, from Jamblichus, "The life of a publican was one of open violence, on account of their exactions and unjust tribute,

their unpunished robberies, their unprincipled conduct in business, and their unblushing usury.

Ver. 11.—*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus within himself.* The Jews prayed partly kneeling and partly standing, when their prayer was longer than usual—sacrifice or psalmody. For in the temple there was no place to sit, except for the High Priest and king alone, as I have showed on Ezek. xlvi. 2. The word "standing" is added here to show the pride of the Pharisee; he raised his head to heaven as if to dispute with God, or to claim and exact the measure of his merits. "For a humble man," as Theophylact says, "is humble of aspect, but this Pharisee is seen to be proud both by his habit and bearing." The Arabic reads, "The Pharisee stood praying." The Pharisee, therefore, stood proudly: 1. As being secure and confident in his own merits, and as calling God to judgment. 2. He stood first, or among the first, near the altar. 3. He stood with his neck and face erect and fixed on heaven, as if heaven were his debtor. The publican, however, stood 1. Trembling and fearful, confessing his sins. 2. Afar off, at a distance from the altar, the last, or among the last. 3. With his face cast down towards the ground, not venturing to look up to heaven, showing his fear and penitence by the place in which he stood and by his appearance. Hence Bede says, *allegorically*, "The Pharisee is the people of the Jews, exalting their merits by the righteousness of the law. The publican is the Gentile confessing his sin *apud se.*" The *apud se* of the Pharisee is referred in the Syriac to "standing," standing *apud se*—relying on himself, trusting to himself, insisting on his own merits and dwelling on them. The Syriac reads "serveto." Our version more rightly connects the *apud se* with "orabat." He prayed with himself in his soul and mind, for the pride in his heart so puffed him up, that he would not pray or speak but with himself—he did not deign to do so before others. He prayed like the Pharisees outwardly, in a grave inflated pompous tone. Hence S. Basil on Isaiah ii. says, "He prayed *apud se* not *apud Deum*—for he acted like himself when he fell into the sin of pride."

He prayed—In his own way, for he did not pray to God, but he praised himself. S. Augustine (*serm.* xxxvi.) on the words of the Lord according to S. Luke: "What did he ask of God? Seek from his own words. We find nothing. He went up to pray; he would not ask of God, but preferred to please himself, and heap insults on the devout publican as well."

I thank Thee. "He is not blamed," said S. Augustine (*serm.* xxxvi.), "because he gave thanks, but because he wished for nothing to be given to him. Whoever says 'I justify myself,' is worse than the Pharisee who proudly called himself righteous, but who also gave thanks to God."

"He gave God thanks," says S. Bernard (*de Grad. Humil.*), "not because he was good, but because he was alone: and not so much for the good which he had himself, as for the evil which he saw in others. He had not cast out the beam from his own eye, and he recounts the motes in his brothers' eyes. For he says 'unjust'—'extortioners.'"

I am not as other men. He should at least have said "as many others," for what does "other" mean, but all men except himself? "I," he said, "am righteous, the rest are sinners;" that is, I alone am righteous, all the rest are wicked. The proud man, to exalt himself the more, especially despises and depreciates others.

S. Gregory (*lib.* xxiii. *Moral.* c. 7) describes four species of pride in this Pharisee. The first is, when men think that they have good, *e.g.*, virtue *a se.* The second, when they ascribe this to their own merits. The third, when they think that they have that which they have not. The fourth, when they wish to be singular, and therefore despise and speak evil of others. The three last of these are clearly shown in the proud and false righteousness of this Pharisee. The first appeared in him because he ascribed his righteousness, not to God but to his own works, and said of God, with the Pagan, "Let God give me strength, let Him give me wealth, I will order my mind myself." "If, in fine," says Theophylact, "he had believed that it was the gift of God that he had graces not his own (aliena), he would not have held other men in contempt, remem-

bering that even he himself was naked as far as regards his own virtue."

Even as this publican.—"See," says an Interlineator on S. Augustine, "how the vicinity of this publican was the occasion of greater pride to the Pharisee." The Syriac has, "Nor as this publican," supply, "am I a public sinner." Of his pride, he judges rashly and falsely that the publican was wicked, when in truth he was a penitent and justified. The Pharisee sinned therefore, 1. In judging rashly; 2. In despising the publican; 3. In reviling and insulting him, for he casts up to the publican his sins. S. Chrysostom in the *Catena:* "All human nature did not satisfy his contempt, but he attacked this publican. Whoever reproaches others, commits many offences. 1. He makes the other worse, for if he is a sinner he who is rebuked rejoices to find a partner in his wickedness; if righteous, he thinks highly of himself. 2. He harms the Church; for his hearers revile it. 3. He causes God to be blasphemed. 4. He makes the other more shameless, and engenders hate towards his rebuker. 5. He renders himself obnoxious to punishment.

S. Bernard (*de Gradib. Humil.*): "The Pharisee, while rejoicing in himself, insults other men beyond measure. David does otherwise. He says, 'All men are liars.' He excepted no one, lest he should deceive him; for he knew that all have sinned, and have need of the glory of God. The Pharisee deceived himself alone, when he excepted himself from the common reproach, lest he should be excepted from mercy. The Pharisee makes light of mercy while he dissembles his misery. The Prophet says, as well of himself as of all others, 'All men are liars.' The Pharisee admits it of all men but himself. 'I am not,' he said, 'as other men.'"

I fast thrice in the week. In Sabbato. This is by synecdoche, the chief day of the week being put for the whole week, which is called sabbatum. Hence the Arabic, "I fast two days in every week." Theophylact says that "the Pharisees fasted on the second and fifth days;" but he gives no authority for it.

I give tithes of all that I possess. Not only of the first-fruits which the law compels, but, for my desire for a higher and a willing service,

I give tithes of all things whatever, as flesh, eggs, fish, to which I am not bound. This Pharisee had branded other men as if they were adulterers and unjust, while he himself alone was pure and just. He would prove himself pure by his fasts, which are the mother of purity, and to be just by his giving tithes of everything. "As regards impurity," says Theophylact, "he makes boast of his fasting, for from luxury comes wantonness. Against usury and injustice he brings forward his giving tithes of every thing that he possessed. 'So far am I,' he said, 'from usury and unfair dealing, that I put aside what is my own.'" So S. Ephrem, in *Catena.*

Morally. S. Gregory here observes (*Homily* vii. *on Ezekiel*): "The Pharisee, who published his fasts and gave tithes, thanked God, as if his guardianship were on the watch throughout the circuit of his whole city; but because he had not noticed one opening, that of pride in himself, there the enemy took possession of him. While therefore he was silent on what he ought to have declared, he unhappily spoke of that on which he should have held his peace; and through his pride, his merits, if he had any, were diminished, for while he held humility in contempt, he augumented his sins."

Ver. 13.—*And the publican, standing afar off.* The publican did not resent the insult offered by the Pharisee, nay, he admitted it, confessed it, and sought pardon for it with patience. He was therefore justified before the Pharisee. S. Chrysostom, in his Homily on David and Saul, says, "The publican accepted the disgrace and washed it out. He acknowledged his sins, and laid them down. This accusation was to be his remission, and his enemy was changed involuntarily into his benefactor. How many labours ought that publican to have undergone, fasting, sleeping on the ground, watching, bestowing his goods on the poor, sitting long in sackcloth and ashes, that so he might lay aside his sins? But when he did none of these things, by a mere word he was rid of all his sin; and the insults and reproaches of the Pharisee, which seemed to overwhelm him with contumely, bought him a crown of righteousness, and that without toil, without labour, and without long delay."

Standing afar off. Afar from the altar and the holy place, for he

thought himself unworthy of these from his sins. He was not so very far off though, but the Pharisee was able to point to him, and he to hear the Pharisee.

He would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven. He dared not, from modesty, humility, and reverence. He would not so much as lift his eyes, as if thinking himself unworthy to look to that heaven which was the abode of the glorious God, who was offended at sins. Wherefore with eyes cast down to the ground, he humbled himself. So S. Cyril in the *Catena.*

S. Theophylact gives the cause of his thinking himself unworthy of the heavenly vision; and S. Augustine: "That he might be looked upon by God, he looked not upon himself. He dared not look up. Conscience weighed him down. Hope lifted him up. Again he showed by his posture that he had sinned against the Heavenly Host, that is against the Angels whose inspirations he had resisted; against the Saints, whose prayers he had made of no avail; against God Himself, whose commandments he had broken."

But he smote on his breast. His breast, in which was his heart, that is his will, which is its own cause and origin of all sins. "He struck and beat it," says Euthymius, "as if to exact punishment from it: and to show that because of it he was worthy himself of stripes." The beating of the breast is a sign of penitence and a contrite heart. Hence this was formerly the act of one who confessed and was penitent, and it is so still. To beat the offending breast is both an ancient and modern custom of Christians. S. Augustine in his 8th Sermon "On the Words of the Lord according to S. Matt.," says, "At this 'Confiteor' you beat your breasts. What is this but to confess what is lying hid in them, and by a visible blow to chastise an invisible sin? Why do you do this, but that you hear 'Confiteor tibi Pater.' Therefore our accusation of ourselves in our confession is the praising of God. For we confess ourselves to be sinners, but God to be without sin, holy and good. We therefore ask pardon of Him. The Pharisee, from his proud and unreal prayer, was the more defiled with sin. The publican was more righteous than the Pharisee, not directly and simply, but indirectly

and negatively; for indeed he was righteous, but the Pharisee was unrighteous, and he returned to his house even more so than he came out." "For," says Euthymius, "he who so condemned himself was justified by God;" and S. Paulinus (*Eph.* lviii.), "What righteousness built up, that pride pulled down. The publican, from a contrite heart, was accepted as an accuser of himself, and obtained pardon from his confession of sins, from the degree of his humility; that holy Pharisee (holy as the Jews are holy) bearing away the pack-load of his sins from his boast of holiness." S. Bernard (*serm* iii. *de Annunc.*): "The Pharisee returned empty because he pretended to be full. The publican, who emptied himself, and took pains to show that he was an empty vessel, carried away the greater grace."

"Humility," says S. Chrysostom, "brought the thief into Paradise before the Apostles. But if humility has such power when close upon the offence, what can it not do when united to righteousness? And if pride, united to righteousness, can depress, what will it do when united to sin?" "Better are sins with humility than innocence with pride," says Optatus. (*Cont. Donat.* B. ii.)

Ver. 15.—*And they brought unto Him also infants, that He should touch them.* And by touching might bless them. Christ confirms the doctrine of humility by His own example. "Infants," says the Gloss, "are brought to the Master of Humility, that innocence and the age of simplicity might be shown to belong to grace."

Ver. 16.—*Suffer the little children to come unto Me.* The Arabic: "For the kingdom of God is theirs who are like them"—not in infancy but in innocence, simplicity, humility. So Bede. "He does not say theirs, but such as they, meaning their manner of life, not their age." And S. Ambrose: "It is not childhood, but the goodness of that simplicity which emulates child-like innocence, that is meant; for it is not a virtue not to be able to sin, but not to will to do so." I have explained the rest on Matt. xix. 13 and following.

Ver. 35.—*And it came to pass as He,* &c. Of this blind man restored to sight I have treated. Matt. xx. 30.

CHAPTER XIX.

1 *Of Zacchæus a publican.* 11 *The ten pieces of money.* 28 *Christ rideth into Jerusalem with triumph:* 41 *weepeth over:* 45 *driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple:* 47 *teaching daily in it. The rulers would have destroyed him, but for fear of the people.*

AND *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho.

2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him; for he was to pass that *way*.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.
19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.
20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:
21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.
22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:
23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?
24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds.
25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)
26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.
27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.
28 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.
29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,
30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against *you;* in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring *him hither.*
31 And if any man ask you, Why do you loose *him?* thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.
32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.
33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?
34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.
35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.
36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.
37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen:
38 Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.
39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.
40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.
41 ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,
42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.
43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

Ver. 1.—*And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.* S. Luke continues the account of the journey to Jerusalem. I have spoken of this in the preceding chapter, verse 35.

Ver. 2.—*And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans.* Christ gave sight to the blind man near Jericho; soon after, in Jericho itself, He converted Zacchæus, for no place, no road, no moment of time was idle to Christ, but all were made notable by divine mercies, benefits, and miracles, that He might teach us to do the same. "Zacchæus." This name is as it were an omen of his future righteousness and purification, for Zacchæus in Hebrew is the same as just, pure, clear. The chiefs of the publicans had many publicans, that is collectors of the taxes, under them. These taxes the Romans and Tiberius had imposed on the Jews against their will. Hence the publicans were hated by the Jews and accounted infamous, being called Parisim, that is, robbers. The chief was called Gabba; whence the word Gabella, the publicans being called Gabbaim. Angelus Caninus on Hebrew words in New Testament.

And he was rich. The chiefs of the publicans were not appointed unless they were rich, that they might advance money to the Roman ruler when he wanted it, and supply, in a great degree, the deficiencies of the publicans under him. S. Luke adds this to show better the grace of Christ and the virtue of Zacchæus, since he left his great wealth for the calling and love of Christ, and distributed it among the poor.

Ver. 3.—*And he sought to see.* He took pains to see Jesus in person as he had heard of His reputation from the fame of His

virtues and miracles. For we wish to see great men and to know them in person. But Zacchæus, beside his natural wish, was impelled by one above nature, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He desired to see Jesus that he might be absolved of his sins by Him, and be justified and made holy. "He wished," says S. Chrysostom in his Homily on Zacchæus, "to know by sight one whom he had known before in imagination, to see the face of Him whom he had seen before in mind, to look upon Him as present whom he had never seen do any works; that the love of Christ which he had conceived in his heart might be gratified to the full by the sight of his eyes."

Ver. 3.—*And he could not.* But he was exalted in mind. Many of the heroes and saints were men of small stature, as I have shown in Zech. iv. 10 and Ecclus. xi. 3, on the words, "The bee is small among flying things, but her fruit is the chief of sweetest things." It is in minimis that the supreme majesty of God, His glory, strength, and greatness, most clearly shine forth. "The crowd," says S. Cyril, "is the confusion of a multitude, which we must climb above, if we wish to see Christ."

Ver. 6.—*And he ran.* Mystically, the sycamore is the cross of Christ and His doctrine, which to the Gentiles and men of this world is mere folly, but to Zacchæus and the faithful is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. 1 Cor. i. 24. S. Gregory, *lib.* xxvii. *Moral.*: in fine, "Let us leave the wisdom that is hurtful, that we may gain that which is to our profit, &c. The dwarf Zacchæus submitted himself to the sycamore tree and saw the Lord; for they who choose humbly the folly of the world, these wisely contemplate the wisdom of God. A multitude hinders our slowness to see God, for the tumults of worldly cares so press upon the infirmity of the human mind that it cannot contemplate the light of truth. We are wise to ascend the sycamore if we retain in our minds, with forethought, that foolishness which is received from God."

Theophylact speaks as follows: "We climb the fig-tree; that is, we ascend above the allurements of pleasure, which is signified by the fig-tree—we mount up by Penitence, but we come down through Humility."

Ver. 5.—*And when Jesus came to the place.* Christ compensates the zeal of Zacchæus to see Him by His full Exhibition and Presence. Christ inspired Zacchæus with this ardour that He might perfect him by entering his house. Christ indeed went thither that He might arouse this feeling, and by it be received by Zacchæus as his guest, and bring blessing and salvation to his whole house. For, although the Saviour of the world, He came to sanctify sinners. "Jesus had not heard the voice of Zacchæus inviting him," said S. Ambrose, "but He had seen his feeling."

Christ therefore not only offered Himself to be seen by Zacchæus, who wished to see Him, but He also gave Himself to be possessed by him, and therefore chose to remain in his house, rather than in the house of any one else.

Moraliter. Let us learn to desire Christ and His inner conversation and grace, for Christ will soon offer Himself to us, and fulfil our desire, and as much as is that desire will be His conversation; for Wisdom, that is Christ, will meet him who fears and longs for God. "As a mother shall she meet him, with the bread of understanding shall she feed him, and give him the water of wisdom to drink." Ecclus. xv. 2, 3. And chap. xxiv., "Come unto me, all ye that be desirous of me, and fill yourselves with my fruits. For my memorial is sweeter than honey," v. 19, 20; and John vii. 37, 38.

Zacchæus, then, saw Christ with the eyes and sight of his body, and still more with those of his mind, by which Christ enlightened his soul to discern that he was the Saviour who would forgive the sins of those who repent, and give them salvation, that is, righteousness, grace, and glory. The countenance of Jesus therefore is not fruitless, and of no effect, but efficacious and operative. For by this alone He attracts men to His love, changes them, and brings them to salvation. Hence, says S. Cyril, "Jesus saw the mind of Zacchæus striving very earnestly after a holy life."

For to-day I must abide at thy house. "Zacchæus," says Titus, "wished only for the sight of Jesus, but He who knows how to do more than we ask, gave him what was beyond his expectation: for Christ of His great bounty exceeds the prayers and powers of the

petitioners." "Christ promised," says S. Chrysostom in his homily on Zacchæus, "that He would come to his house, whose soul and its desires He already possessed."

Ver. 6.—*And he made haste, and came down*—see the prompt obedience of Zacchæus, which deserved salvation—*and received Him gladly.* Zacchæus received Christ into his house, and Christ in return bestowed on him salvation. "Zacchæus rejoiced," says Euthymius, "because he had not only seen Christ, according to his wish, but because he had also been called by Him, and had received Him as his guest, a thing he had never hoped for."

Ver. 7.—*And when they saw it, they all murmured.* ("All"—the Pharisees, and the Jews their parasites, who hated the publicans.) They murmured, *saying that he was gone*, &c.

The publicans were held by the Jews to be impious, unjust, wicked, and they often were such. Some think that "sinner" here means that Zacchæus was a Gentile and idolater. Such is the opinion of Tertullian, SS. Cyprian, Ambrose, Bede, and from them Maldonatus. And that Zacchæus speaks of a restitution of things exacted so unjustly, which was of a natural law, and not ordered by Moses. S. Chrysostom, in his sermon on Zacchæus, says, "He was a son of Abraham by faith, not by birth; by merit, not by descent; by devotion, not by race." But the contrary is equally probable, perhaps more so, namely, that Zacchæus was a Jew, not a Gentile. 1. Because, ver. 9, he is called a son of Abraham. 2. Because Christ only conversed with Jews, for He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Hence He is called by S. Paul "minister of the circumcision," Rom. xv. 8. 3. Because Zacchæus is a Hebrew name. 4. Because the Jews would not have been silent on the matter but would have brought it against Jesus that he held communion with the Gentiles when the Messiah was promised to the Jews alone.

Ver. 8.—*And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord.* We cannot doubt that Christ as soon as He entered the house of Zacchæus began, according to His custom, to teach and exhort both Zacchæus himself and those of his household, to faith and repentance, and, if they

repented, to promise them grace, righteousness, and salvation. He would also urge upon them contempt of riches and the world, and the acceptance of poverty and evangelical perfection, by following Him and giving their goods to the poor, that they might receive treasure in heaven, and a hundredfold in this life. S. Luke, for the sake of brevity, says nothing of this; but from what follows, and from what he had frequently said before, especially xviii. 22, of the custom of Christ to teach and preach, He leaves it to be understood. For by these words of Christ Zacchæus was plainly converted to faith, repentance, poverty, and contempt of riches and the world. He said,

Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. He therefore did not keep one half for himself, but gave back to others what they had been unjustly defrauded of. For he adds, "If I have wronged any man of any thing, I restore him fourfold." "I give," "I restore," that is, I am resolved from this time, and firmly determine to give and restore according to Thy doctrine and exhortation. On account of this efficacious resolution of the penitent Zacchæus, Christ added as a reward, "This day is salvation come to this house." So S. Ambrose, Bede, Euthymius, Tertullian in his fourth book against Marcion, Fulgentius in his epistle to Galla. It is a Hebraism, similar to that of Pharaoh, Exod. v. 10: "I give you not straw," that is, I decree and command that straw is not given to you. Matt. xxvi. 18: "I will keep the Passover at thy house," that is, I will, I determine to keep it. S. Cyprian, however, in his tract On Works and Almsgiving, has explained the words "give" and "restore," by the perfect tense: "I have given, I have restored," as if Zacchæus had been converted previously by other discourses of Christ which he had heard.

And if I have, &c. The Greek is ἐσυκοφάντησα, that is, accused falsely of fraud, calumny, or any other like offence. Zacchæus owns to the crime of defrauding, but in a slight degree: for when, for the sum defrauded he restored fourfold out of his own half of his property, it follows that he gained only an eighth part of his wealth by fraud; so that, if he had eight thousand gold pieces, only one thousand was gained thus, the other seven being his own, either by inheritance, or some other just manner.

Observe the sudden and miraculous conversion of Zacchæus, through the grace of Christ, so that he not only repented at once, but also resolved to put away all the wealth to which he had previously clung, for he set apart half for the poor and half for restitution. Thus he instantly embraced the precept of evangelical poverty, that he might forsake all things, and, as a poor man, follow the work of his hands. "Hear a wonderful thing," says S. Chrysostom, in his Homily on Zacchæus, "He had not yet learnt, and he obeyed. The Saviour by the rays of His righteousness, put to flight the darkness of Zacchæus' wickedness." And Bede, "Behold, the camel has laid down his burden, and passed through the eye of the needle—that is, he gave up the love of riches, and received the blessing of the Lord's adoption. This is the folly which is wisdom, and which the publican chose from the sycamore as the fruit of life; restoring what he had seized, giving up his own, despising things seen." And Theophylact, "Behold his alacrity; he began to sow not sparingly, nor did he give a few things but his whole life." And S. Bernard (Serm. 1, on Festival of all Saints), addressing his own Religious: "Zacchæus, whose praise is in the Gospel, gave the half of his goods to the poor, but I see here many Zacchæuses, who have left themselves nothing of all their property. Who shall write a gospel of these Zacchæuses, nay, of these Peters—who shall say in faith, 'Lord, behold, we have left all things and followed Thee?' But it is written in the everlasting gospel; it is written and signed in the book of life, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'" "I restore," that is, I determine and firmly resolve to restore; nor can we doubt that he acted at once upon this resolve, and carried it out into actual practice.

Fourfold. It was not by the law of nature, nor by that of Moses, that Zacchæus bound himself to restore fourfold; as both only oblige him to restore the original sum. He resolved to perform this great and superabundant act of restitution and justice of his fervent charity and repentance. This is in conformity with the law of Exodus xxii. 1, which orders that a man who has stolen a sheep, should be condemned by the judge to restore fourfold. Zacchæus said this, not from boasting and ostentation, but partly from the

fervour with which he had been inspired by Christ and the Holy Ghost, partly to refute the calumny of the scribes, who objected to Christ, that He associated with a sinner. For he shows that he was now no longer a sinner, but repentant and just—nay, more just than the just and holy.

In trope, S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* lxxviii.) teaches us that we must adorn the house of our souls with almsgiving and righteousness, like Zacchæus, if we desire to receive Christ as a guest.

Ver. 9.—*And Jesus said unto him.* In answer to his words, but so that he might appear to direct His face and voice not so much to him, as to the disciples and the multitude who stood by. There is a like enallage in Rom. x. 2; Ps. iii. 3, and elsewhere.

This day is salvation come to this house. "Condemnation," says Euthymius, "which used to inhabit there, from its avarice having been turned out." The Arabic has "This day is salvation come to the dwellers in this house." "To this house." From this it appears that when Zacchæus believed and was converted, all his household followed his example, and believed in Christ, repented, and were justified and sanctified. Moreover, Zacchæus after his conversion, and the Resurrection and Ascension, became an attendant of S. Peter, and was ordained by him Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine. S. Clim. Recognitions, lib. i. 3.

Forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. Because he followed the faith, righteousness, and holiness of Abraham. For by suffering, says Bede, he left his goods to the poor, as Abraham left his country and his father's house. It is said "he also," to show that not only the just but those also who repent of injustice, pertain to the sons of promise. So Tertullian (*Bk.* iv. *against Marcion*), Cyprian, and others cited above. S. Chrysostom, in his Homily on Zacchæus, vol. ii.: "Zacchæus made an offering of all he had, reserving part of his patrimony for the restitution of what he had gained by fraud. Abraham offered his son to the Lord, Zacchæus his substance. Abraham gave his heir, Zacchæus his inheritance. Abraham displayed his only pledge for an offering, Zacchæus sacrificed the substance of his

property. Thus Zacchæus is rightly termed the son of Abraham, for he followed the course of his father's glory.

Again, Zacchæus was a son of Abraham, because he was a Jew, and a descendant of Abraham. As if Christ, when the Pharisees murmured at His consorting with Zacchæus, a publican, had answered them, "You have no cause to murmur, for Zacchæus is an Israelite, and in his ancestor and father Abraham he has the closest right to the Messiah and salvation. Thus he has no right to be neglected by Me, who am that Messiah, because he is a publican; but because he is a penitent, he ought to receive my adoption and blessing."

Bede, in *allegory* and *trope*, thus applies each part of this history to the faithful and holy: "Zacchæus, that is, pure and justified, signifies a faithful people of the Gentiles who, when depressed by temporal occupations, and of no account, wished to see Christ enter Jericho; that is to share in the faith which Christ brought to the world. The multitude is the habit of vices, which, when it opposed him, he overthrew by relinquishing earthly things, and ascending the tree of the cross. The sycamore is a tall tree, and hence it is called lofty, and the foolish fig, σύκη—μώρα. It is indeed derided by the unbelieving as a foolish cross, but it sustains the believer as a fig. The man of small stature climbs it, when the humble cries out, 'far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of Christ.' The Lord therefore comes, that is, through His preachers, to the people of the nations. He sees, that is He chooses, through grace. He remains in the house of the dwarf Zacchæus, that is, He rests in the hearts of humble nations. Zacchæus descends from the sycamore, for although we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet we do not know Him now. Although He died through infirmity, yet He is alive now from the power of God." The Church rightly reads this gospel of Zacchæus at the consecration of churches. Firstly, because Christ says in it, "This day is salvation come to this house"—words that are rightly applied to the churches when they are consecrated. For the dedication is, as it were, the salvation of the church. The church is consecrated to the salvation of many who are to be justified in it by preaching, prayer, contrition, confession, and absolution.

Again, Christ says, "To-day I must abide in thy house." In like manner Christ abides in a consecrated church, through the venerable sacrifice and sacrament of the Eucharist. For by consecration a church is made the abode and home of Christ. Thirdly, the material is a type of the spiritual Church, that is, of the faithful soul, in which Christ more especially desires to abide, for He wished to dwell in the soul, even more than in the house of Zacchæus, according to the words, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you. Glorify God therefore in your body." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Ver. 10.—*For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save.* It is not wonderful that Christ converted and saved Zacchæus, and publicans and sinners, for, to this He had been sent by the Father, and to this He Himself had come into the world. As, then, the skill of the physician is shown in healing inveterate, hopeless, and desperate diseases, so the supreme virtue of Christ, the Arch-physician, shone out in curing those diseases of the soul, which by nature are incurable, like avarice in publicans. Thus He drew Zacchæus, the publican, not only to despise avarice and all wealth, but to embrace evangelical poverty. In the same way He called the publican and made him an Apostle. The history of Peter the Publican or Telonarius, who gave up all his wealth, and caused himself to be sold for a slave, and the money to be given to the poor, is a further case in point.

Ver. 11.—*And as they heard these things.* Christ had made frequent mention of His kingdom, and had promised it to His followers. The Apostles hoped, therefore, that it would be brought to pass now, as He was going to Jerusalem, and that they as His friends would share in it, and reign with Him among the first. The fame and glory of Christ, which had shone forth with so much brightness and brilliance from His recent miracles, and especially, the stupendous conversion of Zacchæus, increased this hope, from which, as Jesus was entering Jerusalem a little after, the Apostles set Him upon an ass, and cried to the same multitude, as if He were the Messiah and the King, about to be inaugurated in Jeusalem, "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David which cometh"—"Blessed be the

King who cometh in the name of the Lord." Ver. 38. Christ, therefore, to disabuse them of this opinion, spoke the following parable, by which He signified that He must first be put to death by the Jews, and rule by faith throughout the whole world.

Ver. 12.—*He said therefore, A certain nobleman.* Syriac, "The son of a great stock." This nobleman is Christ in His human nature. For as S. Basil says in the *Catena*, Christ is noble not only in His Godhead, but also in His human nature, for He is of the seed of David, according to that which Daniel saw and heard. "He gave to Him power, and honour, and a kingdom." Eusebius adds, on this, "He does not call Himself a king as yet, because in His first coming He did not discharge the duties of a king." For although this kingdom was due to Christ from the beginning, because of His Hypostatical Union with the Word, yet He willed to merit it only by His passion and death on the Cross, and not to enter upon the possession of it till after His resurrection, according to the words in chap. xxiv. 26. Christ therefore went into a far country when, on the fortieth day from His death and resurrection, He went up into heaven, where He entered upon His kingdom, that He might thus be the King of the whole world; and rule alike upon earth and in heaven. So Theophylact, Titus, Euthymius, and others. Christ therefore shall return from heaven to earth on the day of judgment, firstly, to show His kingdom visibly to all men; secondly, to take final judgment, as well on His elect as on the reprobate, and those who are unbelieving and disobedient; thirdly, to bring His elect into His heavenly kingdom, and make them partakers of His glory, as the Angels on His ascension declared to the Apostles, Acts i. 11. Christ shall then return, that He may unite the kingdom of earth to the kingdom of heaven, and show Himself the Lord of earth and heaven, and remove His faithful from earth to His kingdom in heaven.

Ver. 13.—*And he called*, &c. That you may increase my gain and your own. "Ten," that is all his servants, for he gave to each man a mna as appears from what follows. Christ would have us continually traffic with the "mnas," that is His talents, gifts, graces,

which He has given us, that we may assiduously increase our gain of works and merits. He forbids us therefore to be idle; so that our whole life ought not to be one of ease, but of continual trading in spiritual gain, which, says S. Gregory to Dominicus (*lib.* 1 *Ep.* 39), "we truly carry on, if by our lives and words we bring profit to the souls of our neighbours; if by preaching the joys of heaven we strengthen the feeble in the love of things heavenly; if we bow down the bold and haughty by inflexibly proclaiming the punishments of Gehenna: if we spare no man for Truth's sake: if, given up to heavenly friendships, we fear no human enmity." He adds, "But I fear the burthen of my weakness for this work. I see Him when He has received His kingdom, returning and bringing me to account, and with what heart shall I endure His presence, to whom, in return for the work I have undertaken, I bring no gain of souls, or almost none?" This he says. As much more humble, so much greater.

Ver. 14.—*But his citizens hated him, and sent.* The Syriac, "The sons of his state:" The scribes and Jews, that is, hated Jesus, because He taxed them with their vices, and they sent an embassage after Him, saying, "we will not have this man (Jesus, who was poor, of small account, and the son of a carpenter) to rule over us." This was fulfilled after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven when they sent Saul to Damascus to take all who believed in Christ, and root out His faith, name, and kingdom. The same took place when the same men shut up S. Peter and the Apostles in prison, and scourged them, and when they stoned S. Stephen, and slew S. James, and persecuted the rest of the Christians, and still persecute them.

Ver. 15.—*And it came to pass.* The Syriac and Arabic, "And when He had received the kingdom and returned." "This part of the parable," says Euthymius, "is about the second advent, when He shall return with great power and glory, and sit upon the throne of His glory, for He shall then take account and render to every man according to his work." So S. Augustine, Theophylact, Bede, and others. I have explained the rest, Matt. xxv. 19.

Ver. 16.—*Thy pound hath,* &c. As one seed of wheat sown in a

field, by its power sucks up juice from the earth, and converts it into itself, and produces ten, nay, thirty and sixty seeds and grains of wheat. The Arabic has, "Thy mna has gained ten." He did not say, "I have gained," but, "thy mna," because, granted that the freedom and co-operation of our wills concur to a good work, still, the whole working is of divine grace, and not of our will, for the work only has it from our will that it is free; but it has it from grace, that it is supernatural, pleasing to God, and meritorious. Hence S. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Ver. 17.—*And he said unto him, Well.* That is, for one mna thou shalt receive a thousand and a thousand, nay the government of one Province or Decapolis, ten cities or more. That is, for a little labour and care on earth thou shalt receive great, nay, the very greatest ineffable rewards in heaven, and shalt especially precede those on whom thou hast expended the gifts of God on earth, and whom thou hast converted to Christ or hast moved to His faith and goodness. S. Ambrose gives the reason: "As the angels are preferred to be first, so are they also who have merited the life of angels."

And Bede more concisely: "Be it so that thou receivest power over ten cities, that is, thou shalt have more abundant happiness and honour in the heavens, and shalt be glorified above, for all and by all to whom thou hast been a fellow-worker in their salvation. For even after the judgment there will an order of dignity, and fitting mutual honour among the blessed." Hence the words of the Apostle, 1 Thess. ii. 19.

Ver. 18.—*And the second came, saying.* Here is shown the use of free will, and how much is effected by its strenuous co-operation with grace. For the first servant by this means gained ten mnas from one, but this one, by less diligence and labour from one, gained only five.

Ver. 19.—*And he said,* &c. "According to the measure of each one's diligence," says Euthymius, "are honour and reward measured out to him."

Ver. 20.—*And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound*

"I give it back to thee, whole, but without gain or increase." "To tie up money in a napkin," says Bede, "is to hide our gifts under the idleness of a lifeless torpor."

Ver. 27.—*But those mine enemies* (the Jews, His citizens, who would not have Him to reign over them) *bring them hither*—to my Tribunal, in the valley of Jehosaphat and Jerusalem—*and kill them before Me.*" In the Greek, "Kill them before my face." Our Lord alludes to those victorious kings who slew and destroyed their conquered rebels. By this destruction Christ signifies the extreme judgment of the Jews and His other enemies, and their own condemnation to eternal death in Gehenna, and that a living and vital death, where they will be perpetually tormented by death-dealing flames, and yet will never die. Our Lord alludes to Titus, who slaughtered the conquered Jews. He describes precisely to the letter the condemnation of the Jews, and the Gehenna which He has appointed for them when He shall return from heaven to judge and condemn them and the reprobate.

Ver. 28.—*And when He had thus spoken, He went.* From Jericho and the house of Zacchæus, going up to Jerusalem, that He might here begin to fulfil His own words as to His Passion, Cross, Death, consequent Resurrection, Kingdom, Glory, and Judgment. He preceded the Apostles in this journey, which they abhorred, as their Leader and Captain, to show them that He could go cheerfully and bravely to death, nay even as if He were about to provoke death to a conflict: for He was about, through death, to go to a far distant country, namely to heaven, to possess a celestial and eternal kingdom.

Ver. 37.—*To praise God with a loud voice* (saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, Matt. xxi. 9) *for all the mighty works they had seen.* Chiefly the resurrection to life of Lazarus, for it was because of this that the multitude came to meet Him. John xii. 18. So Bede.

Ver. 38.—*Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.* That is, our King, the Messiah or Christ, who was sent by God to save us and give us His blessing.

Peace in heaven. That through Christ we may have peace with

God and the angels, who are offended at our sins, and therefore glory on high, to Him who dwells in the heavens. "He is called the King," says Bede, "not to exact tribute or to arm a host, and visibly destroy His enemies, but because He rules our souls and leads us up into heaven." "Because," he adds, "Christ shone forth in the flesh as the Propitiation of the whole world. Rightly therefore the Heavenly Host, that is the angels who sang at His birth and men who praised Him, when He was about to return to heaven, unite one with another in His praises." Theophylact: "It is shown that the former war, in which we opposed God, has vanished away, and that God is praised by the angels in such a Reconciliation. The same fact, also, that God walks in our land shows that He is in unity with us."

Ver. 41.—*And when He*, &c. To show the bowels of His love to it. How dear to Him was the salvation of the Jews, for to this had He been sent by the Father as the Messiah and Saviour. He wept therefore among all the joys of His triumph, and amidst the happy declamations of those who congratulated Him and shouted Hosanna, that He might temper their joy, by a mixture as it were of gall. He wept as well over the blindness, obduracy, and ingratitude of the people of Jerusalem, because they would not receive Him as their Messiah and Saviour, as for the vengeance of God towards them and the destruction of their nation by Titus; and because He saw His own labours and sufferings for them frustrated and rendered of no effect. These three causes wrung tears from Christ, from the vehemence of His grief. So S. Cyril, Bede, Theophylact and others. *In trope*, Origen says, "Christ fulfilled all the beatitudes in His own Person. He said, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' and He therefore wept."

Ver. 42.—*If thou hadst known.* "As I know," says S. Gregory (*hom.* 39), Bede and others. Because I am come to thee as thy Messiah, for thy salvation, to save thee, and bring thee everlasting blessing, according to the words of Zech. ix. If thou hadst known what is for thy good, salvation, and happiness, namely, penitence and faith in Me, which I have taught thee these three years past, thou

wouldst weep, as I do, for thy past blindness and obstinacy. Euthymius supplies, "Thou wouldst in no wise perish." Others say, "Thou wouldst bear thyself otherwise; listen to Me, and believe in Me." The Syriac has, "If thou hadst known the things that are for thy peace and salvation in this thy day." The Arabic: "If thou hadst known, even thou, and in this thy day, how much peace there was for thee in it." Peace, in Hebrew, means prosperity, safety, happiness, every good, both of body and soul.

It is an aposopiopesis, showing the profound passion of grief and indignation in Christ, for He upbraids the ungrateful city with its unbelief, obstinacy, and ingratitude. This feeling in Christ was so strong that it choked His voice, and compelled Him to be silent, as by aposopiopesis. "For those who weep," says Euthymius, "break off their words abruptly, from the strength of their feelings." There is again great passion "pathos," in the words; "Even thou, O daughter of Zion, by Me so beloved, so honoured, so enriched: for thee have I come from heaven to earth, for thee was I born at Bethlehem, for thee have I lived thirty-four years in continued labour, suffering, poverty. For three years have I taught and preached in thy towns and villages; I have healed thy lepers, thy sick, thy possessed; I have restored thy dead to life. Thou, therefore, daughter of Jerusalem, why dost thou not return the love of one who so loves thee, but scornest and destroyest Him as an enemy? It will come, it will come shortly, that great day of the Lord, in which thou will too late confess thy unbelief and lament thy blindness. This is thy day, in which thou vainly exultest in thy wealth, thy luxury, thy pomps. But My day shall come, yea, the day of the Lord, in which He will most grievously punish thee, and utterly root thee out, and in which thou shalt pour forth the inconsolable and never ceasing tears of most bitter anguish." Similar is the passion of Christ to the traitor Judas. Ps. v. 13.

In trope, S. Gregory in his 39th Homily says, "The perverse soul, which delights in the passing day, here meets its day. The soul, that is, to which present things are peace, because, while it takes pleasure in temporal prosperity: while it is elevated by honour

while it is dissolved in the pleasures of sense, while it is terrified by no thoughts of a punishment to come, it has peace in its day, although in one to come it will meet with heavy condemnation. For it will be afflicted when the righteous rejoice, and all that was lately for its peace will be turned into the bitterness of contention. For it will begin to be at strife with itself, and to question itself, as to why it had not feared the condemnation to come, and had shut the eyes of its soul to the prospect of the evils to come.

But now they are hid from thine eyes. Because (*de Industria*) thou wouldst not know, says Titus. And Eusebius, in the *Catena*, "Christ makes known His coming for the peace of the world, and when they would not receive that peace, it was hidden from them." The Incarnation of Christ, His preaching, His passion, His resurrection, were hidden from the Jews. Equally so their own perfidy, blindness, ingratitude, and therefore their punishment and destruction by Titus. "For," says S. Gregory, "if we saw the evils that are impending, we should not rejoice in present prosperity." Again, in figure, "The perverse soul, while it loses itself in the enjoyments of the present life, what does it but walk with closed eyes into the fire?" Hence it is well written, In the day of good things be not unmindful of the evil. And S. Paul, "Let those that rejoice be as those that rejoice not." For if there is any joy in the present time, it should be so felt, as that the bitterness of the future judgment should never be absent from the thoughts, for while the reverent mind is pierced by fear of the final punishment, in proportion to its present rejoicing will the wrath hereafter be tempered.

Ver. 43.—*For the days shall come.* The Greek reads, "Thy enemies shall cast up a bank about thee and compass thee round." The Arabic, "The days shall come in which thine enemies shall throw down thy standards, and shall surround thee." How truly Christ foretold this appears from Josephus, who in Bk. vi. chap. 37, of his "Wars of the Jews," says that Titus and the Romans erected three mounds round Jerusalem, and, in the space of only three days, surrounded the whole city with a wall of 39 stadia, so that there should be neither exit nor passage for any one. Christ alludes to Isaiah

xxix. 1, 2, "Woe to Ariel," &c. For Jerusalem, which before was strong and unconquered, was, as it were, Ariel—that is, the Lion of God, now deserted by me, and given over to destruction by the Romans, and to become, as it were, the ram of justice, and the sacrifice of divine vengeance. So Eusebius, S. Cyril and Theodoret on Isaiah xxix. 1.

And keep thee in on every side. To such a pitch of famine, and to such straits shalt thou be reduced that mothers shall devour even their own children. Josephus, "Wars of the Jews" chap. xiv. and following.

Ver. 44.—*And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another.* That is, shall destroy thee utterly; spoken in hyperbole, for the Romans were not so laborious or so idle, as to leave no stone upon another. S. Greg., *hom.* xxxix. The migration from the city is testified to, for it is now built on the spot where the Lord was crucified outside the gate. The former Jerusalem is utterly destroyed; for Mount Calvary is now in the middle of the new city.

Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. "The time of this visitation," says Titus, "is that of Christ's coming down from heaven." "In figure all these things," says S. Gregory *hom.* 39, "happen to the soul that has lived as a slave to the flesh. For then the devils surround it on all sides, tempt it, hedge it in, and carry it off to hell. Then all that erection of stones, that is, their thoughts, is overthrown, because they did not know the time of their visitation, when God by His preachers, His confessors, His masters, and His internal inspirations, warned them to amend their lives and take thought for their salvation." Greg., *Dial. Bk.* iv. *chaps.* 30, 38, 46, 52, and following, gives the dreadful example of Chrysaorius Theodore, King Theodoric, and others.

CHAPTER XX.

1 *Christ avoucheth his authority by a question of John's baptism.* 9 *The parable of the vineyard.* 19 *Of giving tribute to Cæsar.* 27 *He convinceth the Sadducees that denied the resurrection.* 41 *How Christ is the son of David.* 45 *He warneth his disciples to beware of the scribes.*

AND it came to pass, *that* on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon *him* with the elders,

2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?

6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence *it was.*

8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty.

12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast *him* out.

13 Then said the Lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved Son: it may be they will reverence *him* when they see him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed *him.* What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard *it,* they said, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder

19 ¶ And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20 And they watched *him*, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of *any*, but teachest the way of God truly:

22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?

23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

24 Show me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's.

25 And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's.

26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

27 ¶ Then came to *him* certain of the Sadducees; which deny that there *is* any resurrection; and they asked him,

28 Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children.

30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

31 And the third took her: and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died.

32 Last of all the woman died also.

33 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.

39 ¶ Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.

40 And after that they durst not ask him any *question at all.*

41 And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son?

42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,

43 Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

45 ¶ Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greet

ings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

Ver. 36.—*They are equal unto the angels.* So the Arabic, Syriac, Egyptian, Persian, and Ethiopic; equal in celibacy, immortality, glory. As therefore the angels do not marry nor generate, so neither do the Blessed, because, being immortal *per se*, and glorious, they will remain for ever. For generation is desired in this life, because of death; as a mortal father might, as it were, survive and endure in the son whom he leaves alive. So S. Cyril: "As the angels are not of generation, so they who rise again will have no need of marriage." S. Chrysostom on Matt. xxii.: "Wives are married that the diminution, which is by death, may be supplied by birth. But death will not be there, and, in consequence, neither marriages, nor wives, nor generation."

And are, &c. "They are called the children of God," says Theophylact, "as being born again through the Resurrection, not only through grace, but also through glory, that they may thus resemble God most closely, as is taught by S. John, 1 Ep. iii. 2. Then as sons they shall enter into the inheritance of God the Father."

"They are called the sons of the Resurrection," says Theophylact, "because they appear to be as it were born to a new, happy, and divine life."

2. They will be the sons of the Resurrection, that is, worthy of the Resurrection, for the word "son" when it is added in Hebrew to the genitive of reward or punishment, means one subject to, one who deserves, or who is destined to, such a punishment or reward. Thus men are called the sons of Death and Gehenna, that is, men subject to death and hell; and the sons of the kingdom and the Resurrection, that is, they who are worthy of the kingdom of heaven, and of the Resurrection of the blessed.

Ver. 40.—*And after that they durst not ask Him any question at all.* That is the Sadducees, for the Pharisees asked Him afterwards which was the greatest commandment, as we find from Matt. xxii. 35.

CHAPTER XXI.

Christ commendeth the poor widow. 5 *He foretelleth the destruction of the temple, and of the city Jerusalem:* 25 *the signs also which shall be before the last day.* 34 *He exhorteth them to be watchful.*

AND he looked up and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.
2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.
3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:
4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.
5 ¶ And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,
6 *As for* these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.
7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign *will there be* when these things shall come to pass?
8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ;* and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.
9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end *is* not by and by.
10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:
11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.
12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.
13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.
14 Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:
15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.
16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death.
17 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake.
18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.
19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21 Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

25 ¶ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.

34 ¶ And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and *so* that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives.

38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

Ver. 18.—*But there shall not an hair of your head perish.* "Because," says S. Gregory, "what was said about death was hard, comfort is added at once, from the joy of the resurrection, when it is said, 'a hair of your head shall not perish.' For we know that the flesh when

wounded, causes pain, but the hair when cut does not. Our Lord therefore said to His martyrs, 'A hair of your head shall not perish.'" From these words of Christ, we may conclude that we shall rise again with our actual bodies. S. Augustine (*De Civitate, chap.* 19, 20.) So S. Bonaventure, S. Thomas, the master of the sentences, Soto, and others. Their proof is from Matt. x. 30: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered;" and from this of S. Luke, "Not a hair of your head shall perish." "Not in length," says S. Augustine, "but in number."

2. We may collect this from reason, for our bodies will rise without deformity, with their natural adornments and comeliness; the adornment of the head is the hair, the beard, the nails. If any one has not these he is a deformed.

Ver. 19.—*In your patience possess ye your souls.* Patience, therefore, is the possession of our souls. Firstly, because patience rules the soul and directs it in peace, and bends and influences it as it pleases. Secondly, because no one can keep the hope of a future life, as S. Augustine says, unless he have patience in the labours of the present one. Thirdly, S. Gregory (*Homily* xxxv. *in Evangel.*): "The possession of the soul consists of the virtue of patience, because patience is the root and guardian of all virtues. Through patience, we possess our souls, because, while we learn to govern ourselves, we begin to possess the knowledge that we are (quod sumus, quod adverb). It is patience to endure calmly the evils we suffer from others, and to be affected with no painful feeling against him who inflicts them upon us. For whoever so takes the oppressions of others, as to grieve in silence, but to look out for a time of retribution, does not possess this virtue, but only makes a show of it. Again, Solomon says, Prov. xvi. 32: 'The patient man is better than the valiant, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities.' The taking of a city is therefore a less victory, because the conquest is outside ourselves. That which is subdued by patience is greater, because the mind is subdued by itself, and subjects itself to itself when patience subdues it to the humility of endurance." S. Gregory adds the example of the Abbot Stephen, who returned contumelies with thanks, and thought a gain, loss, and considered his adversaries his

helpers. Hence, at his death, angels were seen taking his soul to heaven.

The impatient do not possess their souls, but are possessed by the vices of wrath and vindictiveness, and consequently by Satan. They, only, who have ardent love can gain true patience, as those fervent martyrs—SS. Ignatius, Laurence, Sebastian, Vincent, and others. Trajan the Emperor, consequently, said when he conferred, by his sentence, martyrdom on S. Ignatius, "No people suffer so much for their God as the Christians." S. Gregory (*book* v. *Moral. chap.* 13), "What is it to possess our souls, but to live perfectly in all things, and to govern all the emotions of our minds by the art of virtue? Whoever therefore possesses patience, possesses his soul, because he is thus made strong against all adversities, so that he rules even by subduing himself. By whatever he masters himself, he clearly shows himself unmastered, for when he masters himself in his pleasures, he prepares himself to be unmastered by their opposites." In his 39th Epistle to Theoclister; "In your patience possess your souls. Consider a moment where patience would be if there were nothing to be endured. I suspect that he would not be an Abel who had no Cain. For if the good were without misfortunes, they could not be perfectly good, for they would have no purgation. Their very society with evil is the purification of the good." Hence, says Theodore Studita in his 19th Catechetical Lecture, "Endurance is the highest perfection of virtue;" and Lucan (*lib.* ix.):

——Serpens, sitis, ardor, arenæ
Dulcia Virtutis, gaudet Patientia duris.

The sandy desert's burning heat; the pangs
Of raging thirst; its serpent's cruel fangs,
Are Virtue's sweets; for Patience joys in these,
And welcomes hardships more than softest ease.

Lastly, the whole band of virtues flows into patience, so that it appears to be the complex of all virtues. Seneca (*Ep.* 69. and following): "There is a fortitude of which the brands are patience,

endurance, and toleration. There is prudence, without which no undertaking is entered upon, and which persuades us to endure bravely what we cannot escape. There is constancy which cannot be cast down from its pedestal, and the determination of which no force can overthrow. Here is that indivisible society of virtues." And see the words of S. James. i. 4.

Ver. 34.—*And take heed to yourselves, lest* "the cares of this life absorb the mind and sink the faculties," says Euthymius, "and do not allow men to think about their salvation." "The cares of this life," says Titus, "debauchery and ebriety, deprive men of their senses, obscure their faith, and cause forgetfulness of all that is useful and necessary. They distract the mind, seize hold of it, and absorb it in the cares of this world."

Ver. 35.—*For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.* As careless birds are taken craftily by snares, so in the day of judgment shall the men of pleasure be. 2 "As the snare strangles the birds, so shall the day of judgment choke sinners." 3. "As the snare always keeps hold," says the Interlinear, "of that which it has once caught, so shall the sentence, given by one Christian Judge, be perpetual; and either for ever glorify him who is judged, in heaven, or consume him with fire in hell."

Ver. 36.—*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.* The Arabic has, "That you may be strengthened in flight."

Stand before the Son of Man. So Wisdom v. 1: "They shall stand with great constancy." "To those therefore who give themselves up to vigils, prayers, and good works, that day shall not be a snare, but a festival," says Theophylact.

Ver. 37.—*And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple; and at night He went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.* Because olives abounded in it. Christ gave the day to preaching and to His neighbour, but the night to prayer, to Himself, and to God. Thus He gave very little time to repose and slumber.

The same did S. Paul, Dominic, F. Xavier, and others like them. "He went by night," says Theophylact, "into the mountain, to show us that we ought to hold communion with God in quiet at night. By day we should be gentle, and do good." So Bede: "What He commanded in words, He confirmed by His own example; for when the time of His Passion drew near, He was instant in teaching, in watching, and in prayers, either urging those, for whom He was to suffer, to faith by His words, or commending them to His Father by His prayers."

Ver. 38.—*And all the people came early in the morning to Him.* The senses are in their vigour in the morning, and the morning therefore, as the best part of the day, is to be given to God.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *The Jews conspire against Christ.* 3 *Satan prepareth Judas to betray him.* 7 *The apostles prepare the passover.* 19 *Christ instituteth his holy supper,* 21 *covertly foretelleth of the traitor,* 24 *dehorteth the rest of his apostles from ambition,* 31 *assureth Peter his faith should not fail:* 34 *and yet he should deny him thrice.* 39 *He prayeth in the mount, and sweateth blood,* 47 *is betrayed with a kiss:* 50 *he healeth Malchus' ear,* 54 *he is thrice denied of Peter,* 63 *shamefully abused,* 66 *and confesseth himself to be the Son of God.*

NOW the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

3 ¶ Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.

6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

7 ¶ Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves:

18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 ¶ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

21 ¶ But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me *is* with me on the table.

22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

23 And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

24 ¶ And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27 For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

31 ¶ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take *it*, and likewise *his* scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

38 And they said, Lord, behold, here *are* two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

39 ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed,

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

47 ¶ And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

50 ¶ And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

54 ¶ Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sat down together, Peter sat down among them.

56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fellow* also was with him: for he is a Galilæan.

60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

63 ¶ And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote *him*.

64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?

65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

66 ¶ And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

67 Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

68 And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go.

69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Ver. 6.—*And he sought opportunity to betray Him unto them.* Judas sold Jesus Christ on the fourth day of the week, the day of Mercury; on the following day, or the day of Jupiter, he delivered Him to them. Thence followed "the day of unleavened bread." See how sudden was the wickedness of the Jews, and equally cunning and crafty. For they knew that Christ would celebrate the Passover, according to His custom, on the day following at Jerusalem, and that it would therefore be most convenient to deliver Him up then to the Jews at Jerusalem.

Ver. 20.—*This cup is the new Testament in My blood.* That is, this cup is the authentic instrument, and, as it were, the chart and tabula testamentaria, in which My new covenant is written and signed for giving you My heavenly inheritance, written, I say, not with ink, but in My blood. 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c.

Ver. 25.—*And they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.* Benefactor is a title of honour and praise which is bestowed upon princes because they are, or ought to be, good. The proper epithet of kings in former time was "good." Virgil uses it of Acestes (*Æn* i. 195). Martial applies it to Trajan and Domitian, and Horace to Romulus. Homer thought nothing requisite in a king, but to be brave against the enemy, and good to the citizens. Paul calls Felix "Most Excellent." Acts xxiv. 3.

Ver. 26.—*But ye shall not be so.* The Arabic has "Let the greater of you be as the least"—that is, let him among you who wishes to be the greatest, become the least. In this way he shall be the greatest.

Morally, let us learn this parable of Christ, incredible to the world, but in itself most true, and by experience most certain, namely, that the way to exaltation is abasement of self. Do we wish to become greater? Let us become less. God has sanctioned and fixed this way by His eternal law, and therefore Christ was the first-fruits to

enter upon it, that we, by the same law, might follow Him, as in Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Hence S. Francis, a great follower and imitator of Christ, humbled himself to the lowest of all lowness, and wished to be the poorest and vilest of all men; and to a certain saint, a most lofty and splendid seat in heaven was shown, and when he asked whose it was, the answer was given, "It was the seat of one of the great ones among the fallen angels, but it is now reserved for the holy Francis." S. Bonav., chap. vi., Life of St. Francis. The same S. Francis wished his followers to be called "Minores," lest they should presume to become majores. His scribe, S. Francis de Paula, ordered the brethren of his order, to be called not Minores but Minimi. Hence the blessed Magdelena de Pazzi, who has been lately enrolled among the blessed by our holy Father, Urban VIII., received the following order from God, "Be of the order of Minimæ, and the least of them, that thou mayest strive as zealously to be the least as men of this world do to be the greatest." S. Elizabeth, wife of the Landgrave of Hesse, and the daughter of the king of Hungary, personally, against the remonstrances of her friends, tended the sick and outcast, and said that if there were any position more humble still she would gladly fill it, the more closely to follow Christ, who from the first humbled Himself to be the lowest of men, as Isaiah describes, ch. liii.; for in this consists the crown of virtue and perfection. The like did Hedwig, Duchess of Polonia, and her granddaughter, S. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal. So S. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, sold himself for a slave, for the good of a son of a widow, that he might imitate Christ, and make himself one of the most humble of men. Peter Telonarius did the same, as is related in the Life of S. John Eleemosynarius. This is what the wise man teaches, Ecclus. iii. 20. See what I have commented thereon.

Ver. 29.—*And I appoint unto you a kingdom.* As My Father has decreed and prepared for Me, through humility and the cross: through so many labours and sufferings: a kingdom heavenly and eternal, so do I also appoint the same unto you: that is, I decree, prepare, and, going to death I now appoint, as by my will, that

through the same humility, cross, and suffering, you shall possess a like, nay, the same kingdom with Me in heaven; dispute not then who among you shall be greatest, but who shall be less, that each may study to surpass the other in low estate and humility, for whoever does this, shall be first and greatest in my kingdom.

Ver. 30.—*That ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom.* As kings gave to their most intimate nobles a place at their own table, and made them companions of their banquets, but assigned to other and less famous nobles another table, so will I make you, My Apostles, the chief and foremost of My kingdom, and place you most nearly to Myself, and, as it were, at My table, and I will have you as the most intimate guests of My royal feasts. "In like manner," say Euthymius, Titus, and Theophylact, "He shows that the Apostles, as the first and most illustrious of His followers, should enjoy the highest honours with their immortal king. It is by catachresis that the pleasures and honours of the kingdom of heaven are often compared in Holy Scripture to banquets, and feasts of meat and drink, and to the first seats at table with kings; because carnal men understand these things best, but are unable to estimate spiritual ones, and because, as meat and drink are incorporated into ourselves and made our own, so, in heaven by the beautiful vision and His other glorious gifts, God will be incorporated into us, as it were, and will be made our own."

Ver. 31.—*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you.* Sift—that is vex, afflict, agitate, cast you down as wheat in a sieve that it may be cleared of chaff and dust. Satan in the same manner asked God to permit him to sift and afflict Job, and in some degree he obtained his end. He did the same again to Peter and the other Apostles, and again, in part succeeded, when he stirred up the Jews to seize Christ, for then the Apostles themselves fled in fear and were dispersed. The temptation is well compared to sifting and a sieve, because, as by means of the sieve the grains of wheat are separated from the chaff, and remain in the sieve, while the chaff is scattered to the wind, and dispersed in air,

so the faithful and the saints in temptation remain constant, but the wicked fail and fly off.

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. For thee, because I destine thee to be the head and chief of the Apostles and of My Church, that thy faith fail not in believing Me to be the Christ and the Saviour of the world. Observe that Christ in this prayer asked and obtained for Peter two especial privileges before the other Apostles: the first was personal, that he should never fall from faith in Christ; for Christ looked back to the sifting in the former verse, that is the temptation of His own apprehension when the other Apostles flew off from Him like chaff and lost their faith, and were dispersed, and fled into all parts. But Peter, although he denied Christ with his lips, at the hour foretold, and lost his love for Him, yet retained his faith. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxviii.) on S. Matthew; S. Augustine (*de corrept. et Grat.* chap. viii.); Theophylact and others. This is possible but not certain, for F. Lucas and others think that Peter then lost both his faith and his love, from excessive perturbation and fear; but only for a short time, and so that his faith afterwards sprang up anew, and was restored with fresh vitality. Hence it is thought not to have wholly failed, or to have been torn up by the roots, but rather to have been shaken and dead for a time.

Another and a certain privilege was common to Peter with all his successors, that he and all the other bishops of Rome (for Peter, as Christ willed, founded and confirmed the Pontifical Church at Rome), should never openly fall from this faith, so as to teach the Church heresy, or any error, contrary to the faith. So S. Leo (*serm.* xxii.), on Natalis of SS. Peter and Paul; S. Cyprian (*Lib.* i. *ep.* 3), to Cornelius; Lucius I., Felix I., Agatho, Nicolas I., Leo IX., Innocent III., Bernard and others, whom Bellarmine cites and follows (*Lib.* i. *de Pontif. Roman*).

For it was necessary that Christ, by His most wise providence, should provide for His Church, which is ever being sifted and tempted by the devil, and that not only in the time of Peter, but at all times henceforth, even to the end of the world, an oracle of

the true faith which she might consult in every doubt, and by which she might be taught and confirmed in the faith, otherwise the Church might err in faith, *quod absit!* For she is, as S. Paul said to Timothy, "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15). This oracle of the Church then is Peter, and all successive bishops of Rome. This promise made to Peter and his successors, most especially applies to the time when Peter, as the successor of Christ, began to be the head of the Church, that is, after the death of Christ.

And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. "From the sifting of Satan, that is from his temptation and from the sin by which thou wilt deny Me; for by this thou wilt be turned aside from Me, and My grace and love." So Euthymius, Theophylact, Jansen, F. Lucas, and others.

Some take this converted (conversus) as meaning "again" (iterum). So Bede, "Do thou, O Peter, again confirm the Apostles thy brethren, in the faith after My death, whom I now, while alive, strengthen by My words." For the Hebrew often uses the verb for the adverb. So Ps. lxxxv. 6.

Strengthen thy brethren. Thy brethren, and therefore Mine. The condescension of Christ here is wonderful. He does not call the Apostles sons although He spiritually begot them to God, but brothers: as well because Christ as man, was the brother of all men, being a sharer of the same human nature, as because the Apostles in their apostleship and preaching of the Gospel, were the brothers and colleagues of Christ; for they did the same work as He. Hence the Fathers, whom I have cited, and the Doctors of the Church conclude that Peter was set over the other Apostles by Christ, and consequently was made the head and chief over the whole Church, that he might build up, perfect, and confirm the Church in the faith and religion of Christ.

Ver. 36.—*But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip.* A purse filled with money, a scrip with food, that they might have support in the impending persecution; for they will never find either, "because men will fly from Me, who am bound and accused, and consequently from My disciples as men wicked and condemned."

And he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. Christ, in these words, did not command them to take a purse and a scrip, and to sell their garment and buy a sword, for He soon after forbade Peter to draw his sword; but they were a warning of the fierce persecution which was about to fall upon Himself and the apostles, and which was so heavy to those that regarded the difficulty of the case with the eyes of mere human wisdom, that food and weapons would appear things absolutely necessary for the preservation of life. The meaning therefore is this, "Everything, so far, has happened to you, O my Apostles, well and prosperously; for when I sent you to preach the Gospel without purse, or scrip, or sword, you were kindly received by most, fed, and sheltered, and had no need of these things. But now so grievous a persecution is impending over you, and so great is the danger to your lives, that in human prudence it may seem necessary to each to think of the preservation of his life, and therefore to take a scrip and purse for provision, and a weapon for defence, and to sell his cloak, and buy a sword. But to Me, who weigh circumstances by the design and decree of God the Father, there is no need of such things; for I go voluntarily to the cross, and to death, and I offer Myself of My own free will, to those who will persecute Me and crucify Me, so that I may conform Myself to the will of My Father." So S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 85 on S. Matt.), and from him Theophylact on this passage, Jansen, Maldonatus, and others. S. Ambrose says well, "O Lord, why commandest Thou me to buy a sword, and forbiddest me to strike, unless that I may be prepared for my defence, and that Thou mayest appear able to avenge though Thou wouldst not?"

Ver. 38.—*And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords.* They did not understand the mind and words of Christ clearly. He did not mean that they should buy swords, but He wished to show them the impending danger. Christ did not explain His meaning to the Apostles, but concealed it, saying, "It is enough," meaning that Peter and the other Apostles might carry these swords, and even cut off Malchus' ear, which He Himself afterwards restored and healed, showing that He was not compelled by force, but was urged by love,

willingly and freely to suffer and die. Some think that they were not military swords, but rather large butchers' knives, which the apostles used for the slaughtering, sacrificing, and disjointing of the Paschal Lamb. So S. Chrysostom, from whom I have said more on Matt. xxvii.

Ver. 39.—*And He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives.* Bede gives the reason of this: "The Lord, when about to be delivered up, came to the retirement of this accustomed place, that He might be found the more easily. Where are they who maintained that He feared death, and was crucified against His will? Christ was wont, in these last days of His life, to preach in the temple by day, and to retire at night to the mount of Olives to pray. This, Judas, as being an Apostle, and a companion of Christ, knew; and hence he came to this mountain with his followers, and there betrayed and delivered up Christ to them."

Ver. 43.—*And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven.* The angel appeared in a body assumed visibly that he might comfort the eyes and ears of Christ by his appearance and voice. Jansenius thinks that the angel appeared at each of Christ's three prayers, and therefore comforted Him three times, to teach us that God always hears those who pray, and gives them grace and strength unceasingly. F. Lucas, and others, think with more reason, that the angel only appeared once, at the third and last prayer, and comforted Him when He prayed more earnestly, and sweated blood, to show that we ought to persevere in prayer, and that the fruit of such perseverance is the comfort of God, and the vision of angels. For after this consolation from the Father by the angel, the agony of Christ seems to have passed away, and He appears to have prayed no more but to have prepared bravely for death. This angel was Gabriel, says Gabriel Vasquez (*I. p. tom.* ii. *disput.* 244, No. 3), for Gabriel has his name from his fortitude, Gabriel being Geber-el the man of God, or Gebura-el the fortitude of God; for he has the office of comforting the weak, afflicted, and fearful. But he comforted Christ not by strengthening His weakness, but by praising His surpassing fortitude. Lud. de Pont. thinks the same in his "Meditation on the

Agony of Christ in the Garden," because Gabriel was the legate and messenger of the œconomy of Christ, as at the Incarnation (Luke i. 26), and of the seventy weeks of Daniel, which foretold the time of the nativity of Christ.

Others, however, as F. Lucas, think that it was Michael, for he is the highest of all angels, and it became him, as such, to perform this office for the supreme God, that is Christ.

Strengthening Him. "The praise and due adoration of Christ," says Titus, "being premised," he comforted Christ by speaking to Him outwardly and setting before Him the will and glory of the Father, and the rich fruit which would ensue, both to Christ Himself, to men, and to angels, from His Passion. For the angel could not affect the inner mind of Christ, nor immediately change His inner powers. And as He could only be tempted by Satan, externally, so He could only be comforted by the angel outwardly. He could not be taught nor illuminated by him, for He was above all angels, and from the first moment of His conception, was full of wisdom and knowledge. So say the schoolmen with S. Thomas (3. *p.* *q.* 12, *art.* 4): The angel spoke the following, or like words to Christ, "O Lord, bravest of men, Thy prayer is most acceptable to Thy Father; because, notwithstanding Thy natural dread of death, Thou resignedst Thyself wholly to the will of the Father boldly to undergo the death appointed for Thee by Him. Lay aside therefore this Thy horror and grief with which Thou hast voluntarily invested Thyself, and reassume Thy former mind and strength, and come bravely to the work of human Redemption, by which Thou wilt most signally celebrate the glory of God, rejoice the angels, redeem men from Hell, and bring them back to the glories of heaven. Endure the cross for the joy that is offered Thee, as the future author and perfector of the faith of very many. Heb. xii. 2. Thus Thou wilt cause SS. Peter and Paul, Laurentius, Vincentius, Agnes, Cœcilia and very many other martyrs and virgins, men, and noble heroes and heroines boldly to undergo martyrdom for God, and the faithful, with other holy men, who triumphed gloriously over the flesh, the world, and the devil. I know that Thou, O Lord, hast no

need of any strengthening of mine, who am myself strengthened by Thee both to be and to live; but, that this my ministry which I execute as a steward at the command of God Thy Father may be acceptable to Thee, I pray again and again."

Theophylact thinks that the angel spoke thus, "O Lord, Thine is the strength, for thou art powerful against death and hell, to set free the race of men."

Ver. 44.—*And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly.* The "et" here in the Hebrew is causal, and means quia, because. That is, the angel comforted Him; because being in an agony and praying more earnestly, He sweated blood, and then appeared to need comfort, and to merit it. The following was the order of events. Christ had prayed the first and second time, but felt no help of God. Then His feeling growing on Him, He, permitting the agony (that is, a more vehement horror and anguish) to arise in Himself, He sweated blood. To overcome this, He prayed a third time more earnestly, teaching us that as temptation increases our prayers should increase equally. The angel therefore appeared to Him immediately, comforting Him; whereupon He ceased to pray and to fear, and to grieve, and, suppressing and overcoming His agony, He manfully prepared Himself for His Passion, and went forth of His own accord to meet Judas.

More earnestly. The Greek is ἐκτενέστερον, that is, more exclusively, more intensely. For this, as appears from SS. Matthew and Mark, was the third prayer of Christ, and He appears to have remained in it longer. More earnestly, because, as the anguish pressed upon Him, Christ, to overcome it, at once directed the contention of His mind, by praying; and He prayed with a more intense feeling and ardour. Luke includes in one as in a compendium, the three prayers of Matthew and Mark, and therefore relates some things of it, which took place in the first and second, and some which took place in the third.

And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood. The Greek has θρόμβοι, gouts, thick masses. The Arabic and S. Irenæus have

globi. The Arabic says, "His sweat was (made) as distilling blood descending on the ground."

Note. Firstly, Some copies have nothing about this bloody sweat, as S. Hilary shows (*De Trinit. lib.* x.); S. Jerome (*lib.* ii. against Pelagius), lest men should ascribe infirmity of mind and weakness to Christ. But now all versions, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, have the same account, so it is certainly to be read, according to the agreement of the Council of Trent, Session IV.

Secondly, Christ is said to have sweated blood not improperly or as a by-word, and an allegory, as we say of one who is grievously afflicted and tormented, "he sweats blood," as Euthymius and Theophylact explain it—but truly and properly. Hence the words "as it were" denote not resemblance but the truth. So SS. Hilary, Jerome, Augustine *passim.* The Ethiopic renders it plainly, "And His sweat was made as the sweat of blood flowing down upon the earth." The Persian agrees with it. S. Athanasius, also, in hi sixth book to Theophilus, which is on the Beatitude of the Son of God, says, "Anathema to those who deny that Christ sweated true blood."

S. Bernard, treating of this prayer of Christ in the garden, says, "Not only with His eyes does He seem to have wept, but, as it were, with all His members, that His whole Body, which is the Church, might be the more effectually purged by His tears" (*Serm.* 3 on Palm Sunday). The love of Christ indeed was not content with the watery tears of His eyes, but wished, by the bloody tears of His whole Body, to lament and blot out our sins, and these tears of Christ were most efficacious with God the Father. "For," says S. Irenæus (*Lib.* v. *cap.* i.) "the blood of Christ has a voice and 'speaketh better things than that of Abel,' Heb. xii. 24. The blood of Abel calls for vengeance, that of Christ for mercy."

Symbolically, "the reason was," says S. Augustine, "that Christ might show that from His whole Body would proceed the passions of martyrs" (*Seutent. sent.* 68). Again, "The blood of Christ," says Bede, "flowed down upon the earth to show that men of the earth would be moistened by it."

Ver. 45.—*And when He rose up from prayer.* For sorrow contracts the heart, and hinders the vital and subtle spirits from being sent to the head; wherefore the black and crass vapours which are the cause of sleep, invade the brain. But there is a hysteron proteron here. For these things happened before the bloody sweat which took place in the third prayer of Christ, while the former happened in the first prayer, as is clear from SS. Matthew and Mark. The reason is that S. Luke compresses the three prayers into one, and unites what happened at different times in the three prayers as if they had been done in one and the same. For after the first prayer, Christ, visiting the Apostles and finding them asleep, said as follows,

Ver. 46.—*And said unto them, Why sleep ye?* See what has been said on Matthew xxvi. xxvii.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 *Jesus is accused before Pilate, and sent to Herod.* 8 *Herod mocketh him.* 12 *Herod and Pilate are made friends.* 13 *Barabbas is desired of the people, and is loosed by Pilate, and Jesus is given to be crucified.* 27 *He telleth the women, that lament him, the destruction of Jerusalem:* 34 *prayeth for his enemies.* 39 *Two evildoers are crucified with him.* 46 *His death.* 50 *His burial.*

AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led them unto Pilate.

2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest *it*.

4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and *to* the people, I find no fault in this man.

5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilæan.

7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

8 ¶ And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long *season*, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by him.

9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12 ¶ And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

13 ¶ And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*.

17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas!

19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21 But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.

22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go.

23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus.

27 ¶ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

32 And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 ¶ Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar;

37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 ¶ And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.
46 ¶ And when Jesus had crièd with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.
47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.
48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.
49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.
50 ¶ And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor; *and he was* a good man, and a just:
51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) *he was* of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.
52 This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.
53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.
54 And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.
55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.
56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

Ver. 39.—*And one of the malefactors which were hanged*—(this one, according to tradition, hung on the left hand of Christ)—*railed on Him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.*

If thou be the Christ, and Saviour of the world, save Thyself and us, free us from the cross and restore us to life and liberty. Christ chose to undergo the most bitter sufferings from all classes, and to be mocked and blasphemed, not only by the scribes and Jews, but even by the robber, the companion of His punishment. This made His trial the more hard; for the robber ought to have suffered with Christ and to have taken thought for the salvation of his soul, and to have begged it of Christ; as we also should beg that we may be quiet under scoffs, derisions, and insults, and be patient in mind and silent in speech.

Ver. 40.—*But the other* (who is said to have hung on the right side) *answering rebuked him.* The Syriac says, "Dost thou not fear, no, not even from God" (etiam, non, a Deo, non times tu)?—that is, the scribes and Jews are well and strong and do not fear God, and therefore scoff at Christ; but thou, who art tormented on the

cross, oughtest to fear Him, lest He punish thee severely, for blaspheming His Christ so sacrilegiously. This robber showed that he not only feared God himself, for "the beginning of wisdom" (and salvation) "is the fear of the Lord" (Ecclus. i. 16), but he also exhorted his companion to the same fear. That is, Let the Jews mock at Christ; we ought to fear God, because we are in the same condemnation—the punishment of the cross, to which we are justly condemned. But Christ, who was innocent, was so condemned unjustly. Again, we should rather compassionate a companion in punishment, especially if innocent, than reproach him; because we ought to prepare ourselves for death and the judgment of God, where we shall give account for our blasphemy and undergo the heavy punishment of Gehenna. In his words, "Dost thou not fear God?" he seems to allude to Christ and to confess Him to be God. As if he had said, "Fear thou the retribution of Christ, whom thou blasphemest, for He is not only man but God also." For, that he believed this from Christ's illumination we shall shortly see. So S. Ambrose, and Eusebius, whose words I will produce.

Ver. 41.—*And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds.* This was an act of profound and public confession, contrition, and repentance, by which he expiated his former sins.

But this man hath done nothing amiss. The Greek is ἄτοπον, which means out of harmony, unbecoming, incongruous, nothing worthy of the slightest blame or reprehension. Lo! a free and public confession of, and testimony to, the innocence of Christ, given before the scribes and rulers, who had condemned Him, fearing nothing.

Ver. 42.—*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom.* "The heavenly and divine kingdom, to which Thou passest through the death of the cross, that shortly Thou mayest enter into it by death, and bring into it Thine elect. Wherefore I beseech Thee to bring me also into it with Thyself, and I implore of Thee pardon for all sinners, for whom I very greatly grieve. I offer to Thee, moreover, the torments of this cross, and the death upon it which I willingly undergo. To this end, I wholly resign, dedicate, and consecrate myself to Thee; I would

that it were given to me to suffer these and still other torments for Thy faith and love." These words show his living and ardent faith, hope, love, humility, patience, contrition, and other virtues.

Moraliter. Learn from this the strength, efficacy, and swiftness of the grace of Christ, by which, from the cross itself, He made a man holy, most holy. Wonderful was the conversion of S. M. Magdalene—wonderful that of S. Paul, but much more wonderful this of the thief. For S. Mary had witnessed the words and miracles of Christ; and S. Paul had felt Him strike him from heaven; but the thief on the very cross, where Christ was suffering the infamous and atrocious death of a criminal, was converted to Him by herioc acts of faith, love, devotion, &c.

SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, on S. Matt. xxvii., Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechetical Lectures, xiii., Origen, Tract xxxv. on S. Matt., say that this thief had first blasphemed Christ with his companion, for SS. Matt. and Mark say in the plural "the thieves reproached Him," though SS. Augustine, Epiphanius, Anselm and others think, like Suarez, with more probability, the contrary. These think that one of them was called "the thieves" by synecdoche, for S. Luke says that one blasphemed and the other confessed. If one of them blasphemed first, so much the greater miracle that conversion by which he suddenly changed blasphemy into the confession and praise of Christ. This change of the thief was "the right hand of the High One" (Ps. cxviii. 15, 16; *dextera Excelsi*). It may be asked by what means he was converted. I reply, 1. Outwardly, by the example of the virtues which he discerned in Christ, namely, His singular love, by which he heard Him praying for His enemies, His patience, fortitude, religion, and all virtues. So Theophylact and Euthymius, c. 67, on S. Matt. 2. Inwardly, by the rare and almost miraculous motion and representation of God, by which he knew Christ to be innocent and the King of a higher kingdom and the supreme Lord, in whose power it was to make even a dead man happy; and therefore that He was the Messiah, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. So S. Leo (*Serm.* ii. *de Pass.*): "What exhortation

persuaded him to the faith? What teaching instilled it? What preacher kindled it? He had not seen the miracles performed previously; the healing of the sick had ceased; the giving of sight to the blind, the recalling of the dead to life, the things that were about to happen had not taken place yet, and he still confesses Christ to be the Lord, whom he saw to be a partaker of his own suffering. Hence came this gift, hence this faith received its answer." Observe the above words, "the things that were about to happen had not taken place yet," for they seem silently to reprove those of S. Jerome, on chap. xxvii. S. Matt., "When the sun disappeared, and the earth was moved, and the rocks were rent, and the darkness rushed down, one thief began to believe and to confess Christ." This opinion of S. Jerome is stated by S. Chrysostom almost in the same words, in his second Homily "On the Cross and the Thief," and by Origen, in tract 34 on S. Matt.

But it is wonderful that these Fathers did not see that this assertion was at variance with the Gospel, because, except the darkness, the other signs happened after the death of Christ, as is clear from the gospel of S. Luke, whilst it is plain from the same gospel that the thief was converted whilst Christ was alive; for the cessation of the sun's light, and the darkness are related by S. Luke after the conversion of the thief. S. Cyril teaches the same as S. Leo (*Cat. Lect.* xiii.) saying, "What virtue illuminated thee, O thief? Who taught thee to love contempt, and that, when thou wast affixed to the cross? O light undying, lighting the darkness!" S. Augustine follows out at length the same idea (*Serm.* xiii. *de Temp.*); S. Chrysostom (*Hom. de Latrone*, and *Serm.* 1 *de Cruce et Latrone*). Suarez also; who adds that it was possible that the thief, before he was imprisoned, may have heard Christ preach, or have seen His miracles, or heard of them, and, perhaps, have believed in Him. S. Vincentius, in his Sermon on the Good Thief, says, that he was converted by the shadow of Christ, when the sun in its decline, and the shadow of the cross, touched him. So the shadow of S. Peter healed the sick. Acts iii. Others add that the virgin stood in the midst, between the thief and Christ, and obtained this grace for him, and that Christ

showed Himself to him when he was dying, as truly crucified, as they who are crucified are shown to the people. Add, that he saw the heavens and the earth darkened, and the day changed into night, because of the Cross and death of its Creator.

The extraordinary holiness of this thief appears from his great faith, hope, and love. Faith by which he believed in Christ as the king of kings, though he saw him as the vilest of men, nay as a crucified thief. Hope, by which he sought from Christ to be admitted into His kingdom. Love, by which he rebuked the blasphemy of his companion. He openly confessed, and defended the innocence of Christ against the Jews and His most bitter enemies, when all the others, even the Apostles themselves, fled for fear and deserted Him. His confession, therefore, was heroic. S. Greg. (xviii. *Moral. chap.* 13): "On the cross, the nails fastened his hands and feet, and nothing of him remained free from punishment, but his heart and tongue. God inspired him to offer the whole to Him, of that which he found free in himself, to believe with his heart to righteousness, and to confess with his lips to salvation. In the hearts of the faithful there are, as the Apostle testifies, three chief virtues, faith, hope, and charity, all of which the thief, filled with sudden grace, both received and preserved on the cross."

S. Augustine (*Serm. de Feria* 3, Of the Pasch; and Book 1 On the Soul and its Origin, chap. 9): "To this faith I know not what can be added. If they trembled who saw Christ raise the dead, he believed who saw Him hanging with himself on the cross. Assuredly Christ found not so great faith in Israel, nay, in the whole world. "Before he asked any thing for himself, he laboured to benefit his companion. This was a mark of singular charity." S. Chrysostom, Some in fact call this thief a martyr, like S. Cyprian in his letter to Fabian, and assert him to have been baptized in His own blood. He repeats the same in his *Serms. de Cœna* and *de Passione*—where he says, "The thief by his confession on the cross, not only merited indulgence, but was made the companion of Christ, and was sent before Him to Paradise, and made a sharer of His kingdom by confession, and a partner of martyrdom." S. Augustine refers to these

words of S. Cyprian, Lib. i. On the Soul and its Origin, and Lib. iv. On Baptism, chap. 22, where he says, "The thief had no need of baptism or martyrdom, but was saved by his contrition alone." He had said before "that although the thief did not die for Christ, yet his death was of equal avail with God (because he confessed the Lord crucified) as if he had been crucified for Him, and so the measure of martyrdom was found in him who believed in Christ when they who were to be martyrs fell away."

S. Augustine again (*serm.* 120 *De Tempore*): "The thief was not yet called, but was already an elect—he was not yet of the household, but he was a friend—not a disciple, but a master—and, from a thief, a confessor; for although punishment had commenced in the thief it was perfected in the martyr." *De anima et ejus orig. cap.* 9: "The robber ranked as highly for his confession of his crucified Lord as if he had been martyred for Him." S. Jerome (Ep. 13 to Paulinus): "The thief changed the cross for paradise, and made the punishment of his murder, martyrdom." Drogo, Bishop of Ostia (*Tract. de Sac. Dom. Pass. tom. ii. Bibliothica SS. Patrum*), calls him "a martyr." Some assert, as a probable reason of his martyrdom, that the Jews hearing his confession of Christ, by which he condemned their deeds and their judgment on Christ, were so stirred up by anger against him as to break his legs, as the Gospel relates, and to make his death more speedy and painful, and in the end to make him a martyr. And S. Hilary (*lib.* ii. *de Trin.*) calls him a martyr. "He promised to His martyr paradise—His martyr, that is, His witness, because the thief on the cross bore testimony to his own faith and hope in Christ, or he would not have been properly and precisely a martyr, because he suffered for his own sins, and not for Christ: unless, as I have already suggested, we say that the Jews aggravated and accelerated his death, because of his confession."

Lastly, the Abbot Arnaldes or Renald (Tract 29 on the Seven words of Christ on the Cross, in the Bibliotheca SS. Patrum), asserts that the thief was carried up into the heavens, and possessed a seat above all angels and above all cherubim and seraphim, even the throne of Lucifer himself. See Stephen Binettus' Book on the Good

Thief, where he calls him "The Archangel of Paradise, the first-born son of the crucified Christ, the martyr, the apostle and preacher of the whole world, who, from his chair of the cross, preached Christ to the whole world." "Paul," he said, "preached like the cherubim, the thief loved as the seraphim." Hear now the praises of the fathers of him.

S. Chrysostom (Homily on the Cross and the Thief): "The thief purchased salvation from the tree. This thief stole the heavenly empire, he used compulsion to Majesty." And below, "We find no one before the thief to have merited the promise of paradise, not Abraham, not Isaac, not Jacob, not Moses, not the Prophets or Apostles, but before all we find the thief." He then compares the faith of the thief to that of Abraham, Isaac, Ezekiel, Moses, and this because he believed in Him, not in the temple, nor on His throne, nor in His glory, but as He was on the cross and in torments. "He sees Him," he says, "in torments and adores Him as if He were in glory. He sees Him on the cross and prays to Him as if He were sitting in heaven. He sees Him and he calls upon Him, hailing Him as King of kings, saying, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' Thou seest one crucified and thou callest Him a King, thou seest Him hanging on a tree and thou thinkest of the kingdoms of the heavens. O wonderful conversion of a thief!"

S. Ambrose (*serm.* 45): "It is the more to his grace and praise that he believed in Christ on the cross; and the suffering which was a scandal to others, availed to him for faith. Rightly then did he purchase paradise who thought the cross of Christ not an offence but a virtue." And serm. 50: "Let him see His gaping wounds, let him look at His blood gushing out—he still believes Him to be God whom he knew not to be a criminal, he confesses Him to be righteous whom he knew not as a sinner." And shortly after, "He understood that for the sins of others Christ bore these wounds. He knew that those wounds on the body of Christ were not the wounds of Christ, but of the thief, and he therefore began to love Him more when, on the Body of Christ, he had recognised his own

wounds." Again, "Great and wonderful, indeed, is that faith which believed that Christ crucified was glorified rather than punished For in this was the form of his whole salvation. He then recognised the Lord of Majesty, when he saw Him crucified with the patience of humility. He went before in devotion, who went before also in reward. For the thief came into paradise before the Apostles."

Eusebius of Emissa (or whoever was the author, for the style shows that he was a Latin, not a Greek or Syrian like Eusebius) in his Homily "De Latrone beato:" "How singular and how stupendous that devotion. The criminal believed at the very moment when the elect denied. It was more praiseworthy and more admirable in the thief to believe in the Lord when in bonds, and falling under the last punishments, than if he had done so when He was doing mighty works. Not therefore without reason did he merit such a reward." He adds the cause. "The heart of the thief, I think, who was now a believer in Christ, was illuminated more properly by the Godhead in a bodily form, which had infused Itself more widely at that moment of the consummation of the redemption." And again, "He did not say, 'If Thou art God deliver me from this present suffering,' but his 'because Thou art God deliver me from the judgment to come,' shows to the world its Judge and the King of ages. Although punishment began in the thief, it was perfected in a new manner in the martyr."

This penitent thief, again, is termed by S. Athanasius an evangelist. "O Thou excellent one! Thou wast crucified as a thief, thou comest forth suddenly as an evangelist." He is called by S. Chrysostom in his Sermon on Parasc., "a prophet," that is a preacher and enunciator of the greatness of Christ. "O the might of Jesus!" he says, "the thief is now a prophet and preaches from the cross!" He calls him "a robber and seizer of paradise." "Thou sawest," He says, "how he did not forget his former craft, even on the cross, but, by his confession, stole the kingdom." So Sedulius (*Carm.* v. *on Pasch*):

> "Abstulit ipse suis cœlorum regna rapinis,"
> "And he the heavenly kingdom took by force."

S. Cyril (*lib.* ii. *de Adoratione*) and S. P. Damianus (Serm. on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross) calls him the first-fruit of the cross and of believers. Christ is thus pointed out by Drogo: "Thou wert Peter on the cross, and Peter in the house of Caiaphas was the thief," because he denied Christ, whom the thief on the cross confessed before the people. He is called by S. Cyprian, or whoever is the author of the *Sermon de Passione*, "The colleague of the martyrdom of Christ." By Arnold, abbot of Bona Vallis, (*tract de verb. Christ*): "The comrade" (collateralis) "of Christ, and the forerunner of His victory." By S. Chrysostom (Homily on the Man Born Blind): "The advocate of Christ, because he defended Him against the Jews, like an advocate." By Anastasius the Sinaite *lib.* v. *Hexam.*), "The bird of heaven, the great eagle, flying through the air to paradise." S. Athanasius classes together many eulogies in his aforesaid piece on Parasc:—Among other things he says, "O thief, fellow soldier of Christ, accuser of the Jews. O thief, merchant of the kingdom, keeper of paradise. O thief, the garland, as it were, of the cross, making a heaven for thyself. O thief, teaching men how to carry off a kingdom as if by theft. O thief, the last to come, the first to be crowned. O thief, mighty accuser of the Jews. O thief, colleague (symmista) of the Apostles, purchaser of Christ!" Hear S. Paulinus in his Panegyric of the youth Celsus:

Mœror abi! discede pavor! fuge culpa, ruit mors.
Vita resurrexit, Christus in astra vocat.
Morte mea functus, mihi mortuus, et mihi victor,
Ut mors peccati, sit mihi Vita Dei.
Denique, servatum jam de cruce, duxit aperto
Limite, Latronem, qua Paradisus adest.

1.

O grief depart: depart, O fear:
Flee guilt, for death ends all.
Life, life has risen; from out the stars
I hear my Master call.

2.

Death's debt is paid! I'm dead to self,
O'er self I victory win;
Be thou the life of God to me,
Who art the death of sin.

3.

Sav'd by the cross, the contrite thief
He led unto the door—
The open door of paradise,
Open for evermore.

Christ answered S. Bridget when she prayed for a penitent sinner who had no means of confession, in these words: "He laments because he has none to hear his confession; tell him that the will is sufficient. For what benefited the thief on the cross? Was it not his good will? Or what opened heaven to him but his wish to desire good and hate evil? What makes hell but an evil inclination and inordinate concupiscence?" This is found in the sixth book of the Revelations of S. Bridget, chap. 115. See further, T. Reynaud in a learned work he wrote on the change of the thief into an Apostle—where, chap. xvii., he says, "He formed figurative honey by Christian bees, which they gathered from the meadows of the holy thief."

Ver. 43.—*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.* That is, in a place of pleasure where thou mayest be in the beatitude and beatific vision of God, *i.e.* To-day I will make thee for ever happy; I will make thee a king reigning in the kingdom of glory with me this day. So S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catechet. Lect.* c. 13); S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* ii. *de Cruce et Latrone*); S. Gregory of Nyssa (*Serm. on the Resurrection*); S. Augustine (*Tract.* 111 *on John*). He explains paradise by heaven, that is celestial beatitude. It is certain that Christ on the day on which He died, did not go up to heaven with the thief, but went down into the *Limbus Patrum* (S. Augustine *Lib.* ii. *de Genese ad litt.* chap. 34; and Maldonatus by paradise here understand Abraham's bosom), and imparted to them the vision of His Godhead and thus made them blest, changing the order of things; for He then made limbus to be paradise, and the lower parts the upper, so that hell should be heaven. For where Christ is, there is paradise; where, the vision and beatitude of God, there, heaven. For, as to what Euthymius and other Greeks say, denying that the souls of the saints see God before the judgment and are happy: by paradise they understand an earthly place; that to which Enoch was carried. But it cannot be so—for it is of the faith that Christ, shortly after His death went down *in infernum*—that is, the limbus of the Fathers, but He did not go into any earthly paradise. It is, more-

over, uncertain whether, after the Deluge, there be any earthly paradise remaining. But grant that there be such, it is the happy and joyful habitation, not of souls, but of bodies only. Hence it is plain from this passage, against the Greeks, Calvin, and the other innovators, that the souls of the saints, when thoroughly purged from sin, do not sleep till the day of judgment, but there behold God, and are beatified by a vision of Him.

Moraliter. Observe here the liberality of Christ, who exceeds our prayers and vows. The thief only prayed Christ to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Christ at the same time promised him a kingdom, that he might reign in it as a king. "This day," says Eusebius of Emissa, in his "Homily on the Blessed Thief"—"as if He would say, O my faithful companion and one only witness of so great a triumph, dost thou think that I need to be so earnestly entreated to remember thee? this day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." And again, "Christ when placed in the yoke (patibulum) as an arbiter between the two condemned, rejected him who denied, and received the one who confessed; on the latter He bestows a kingdom, the former He leaves in hell. Let us then believe that He will come to judge, whom we see to have already on the cross exercised judgment." This is that most sweet answer of Christ to the thief which Fulgentius (*serm. nov.* 60), calls "the testament of Christ, written with the pen of the cross."

Lastly, the name of this most blessed thief is said to have been Dismas, for some chapels are found, in the name of "Dismas the Robber." His day in the Catalogue of Saints is the 25th March, for on that day he seems to have suffered, and Christ in consequence on the same day. For we find in it, "At Jerusalem, the commemoration of the holy thief who confessed Christ on the cross, and who therefore merited to hear 'This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.'"

Ver. 46.—*Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.* The Arabic has *pono*, Tertullian *depono* (*cont. Prax. cap.* xxv.) The Hebrew word Hiphid means the same as our "commend." "*My Spirit.*" S. Athanasius in his work *De Human. Nat. cont. Apollin.*,

says, "When Christ said on the cross, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit, He commends all men to the Father, to be, by Him and through Him, restored to life; for we are members, and those many members are one body, which is the Church. He commends therefore all who are in Him to God." Christ therefore, according to S. Athanasius, calls men His soul and spirit. What then ought we not to do to profit and save souls, that we may keep as it were for Christ, His soul and spirit? So S. Paul to Philemon and Onesimus, "His bowels." "He gave His life," says S. Cyril, "into the hands of His Father (*Lib.* 11 *on John* chap. xxxvi.), that by this and through this, as a beginning, we might have certain hope of this, firmly believing that we shall be in the hands of God after our death." So Victor Antiochus on S. Mark, "This recommendation of Christ tends to the good of our souls, which, when freed from the bodies previously inhabited by them, He gave by these words, as a kind of deposit, into the hands of the living God." And Euthymius: "God did this for us, that the souls of the just should not henceforth go down into hell, but should rather ascend to God." He cites Ps. xxxi. 5, when David, afflicted and in danger of death, spoke as much in his own person as in that of Christ and said, "into Thy hands I commend my spirit." And, from this, the Church daily uses the same Psalm and verse, and sings it in the Compline at night, to teach us, when we retire to rest, to commend our souls to God, because at night we run many risks of sudden death. The dying use the same words, as did S. Nicholas, Louis King of France, and S. Basil. S. Basil did it in the presence of angels, who brought him away; as S. Gregory Nazianzen testifies in his oration on him. S. Stephen also cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

By these words we testify—1. That at our birth we received our souls, not from our father and mother, but from God alone; and that we therefore give Him back the same, as His own creatures. 2. That we believe that our souls do not die at our death, but survive and are immortal, and return to God who gave them and who will judge them. 3. That we believe in the resurrection of the flesh. For in death we commend our souls to God that He may

keep them, as it were as a deposit, and restore them again at the resurrection to our bodies. 4. That in the last agony which we undergo, most bitterly, from the devils, we implore the assistance of God, that in giving back our souls to Him, we may overcome and triumph over the devil. Hence many think that each of us has his own peculiar devil, who appears to the dying in some terrible form, and tempts them to despair, and to other sins, as he did to S. Martha and others, but not to all. S. Ephrem seems to think this in his sermon on those who sleep in Christ. S. Chrysostom (Hom. 34 on S. Matt.), and others whom our own Lorinus cites on Eccles viii. 8. Many think the same of Christ. Hence Eusebius (*Demonstrat. Lib.* iv. *cap. ult.*) understands Christ's words, Ps. xxii. 12, "Many strong bulls of Basan have beset me round," of devils whom Christ saw, mocking Him on the cross as a criminal and wicked, and insulting Him for His crucifixion and impending death. Habakkuk seems to support this idea, iii. 5: "Burning coals" (diabolus) went forth at His feet;" and S. John, xiv. 30: "The prince of this world cometh, and he hath nothing in Me." Christ lays down His Spirit therefore into the hands of God, certain that no one can sever Him from it. For God is a most faithful and strong protector. So S. Jerome on Psalm xxxi. 5, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." That is, "into Thy power." This example the Church received from Christ, and S. Stephen followed it. The saints when departing, use the same words; as the following: "They commend their souls to the faithful Creator for His good acts;" our Lord said this, when hanging on the cross, commending His Spirit to the hands of the Father as being to receive it again at the resurrection.

Symbolically, Didymus in his *Catena* on Psalm xxxi. "The spirit is threefold—1. Our thought. 2. Our soul. 3. Our conscience. These three we ought to commend to God."

And having said thus, He gave up the ghost. The Syriac. "He said this, and ended," His life, that is. The Arabic, "And when He had said this He gave up His Spirit." This was a certain sign that He was the Son of God the Father, who was called upon by Him, and that the Father heard the cry of the Son and received His soul.

"For when He had said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit;' then, at last, He suffered death to come to Him." Says Euthymius, on Matt. xxvii: "As certainly knowing that the spirit, placed in His hands as a deposit, the Father would keep securely, and would give back in the resurrection on the third day. Firm in this hope He gladly and with alacrity rendered up His Spirit to the Father."

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 *Christ's resurrection is declared by two angels to the women that come to the sepulchre.* 9 *These report it to others.* 13 *Christ himself appeareth to the two disciples that went to Emmaus:* 36 *afterwards he appeareth to the apostles, and reproveth their unbelief:* 47 *giveth them a charge:* 49 *promiseth the Holy Ghost:* 51 *and so ascendeth into heaven.*

NOW upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7 Saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered his words,

9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

13 ¶ And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things, which are come to pass there in these days?

19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

36 ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he showed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

43 And he took *it*, and did eat before them.

44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 ¶ And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

50 ¶ And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Ver. 1.—*Now upon the first day of the week.* The first day after the Sabbath, the Lord's day, *i.e.* the day on which Christ rose from the dead. See S. Matt. xxviii. 1.

Ver. 10.—*Joanna.* A disciple, although her husband Chusa was the steward of Herod, who was an avowed enemy of Christ. So, as in the cases of SS. Serena, the wife of Diocletian, Antherina, her daughter, Tryphonia and others who were the near relatives of emperors notorious for their persecutions. God gathers roses from thorns, and wills that wives should win over their husbands, and that queens should make of none effect the evil counsel of kings.

Ver. 13.—*And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus*, &c. These two are generally considered to be the same as those mentioned by S. Mark xvi. 12, but Euthymius is of a different opinion, and argues that the Apostles believed these (see verse 34), whereas S. Mark, xvi. 13, expressly states that those spoken of by him, "went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them." But I answer that most of them believed, although some, as Thomas, doubted.

You ask, who were these two? I answer, one was Cleopas, but that it is uncertain about the other. S. Ambrose thinks he was called Amaon, because he was a native of Emmaus. Origen calls him Simeon. S. Epiphanius considers him to be the Nathanael mentioned by S. John i. 45. Very many again think that it was S. Luke himself, but it seems from the introduction to this Gospel that S.

Luke had never seen Christ in the flesh, and that he was converted after the death of the Lord.

Two of them, i.e. of the disciples, went probably on some matter of business, and also for the purpose of diverting their thoughts from the sad subject of their Master's passion.

Threescore furlongs, στάδιους i.e., 125 paces, the eighth part of a Roman mile.

Called Emmaus. Emmaus was a village in the time of Christ, according to S. Jerome the birthplace of Cleopas; who seems now to have gone thither for some family reason. In the Hebrew the name may mean, according to its spelling, "fear" or "ardour." Each meaning is here very appropriate, for these two disciples were of a timorous disposition, but when the love of Christ was kindled in their hearts, their fear gave place to burning zeal. Others take ἐμμαὺς as equivalent to עם מאום am maus, "a people rejected," and explain that the two disciples, because of their doubtings and distrust, were drawing nigh unto rejection, but were recalled by Christ and sent back to the chosen Apostles in Jerusalem.

Some say that this Emmaus, after the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans, was enlarged and called Nicopolis, of which Sozomen writes, "Before the village, where the roads meet, when Christ made as though He would have gone further, is a healing spring, in which not only men, but also animals suffering from manifold diseases, seek relief. For they say that Christ came thither with the disciples, and washed His feet therein, from which time its waters have possessed healing power." He adds something similar about a tree near Hermopolis, the leaves, fruit, and bark of which cure many diseases, because it bent in adoration as Christ passed on his flight into Egypt.

Many are of opinion that there were two places known by the name of Emmaus, one, the city afterwards called Nicopolis, about 140 stadia from Jerusalem, the other the village mentioned in the text.

Ver. 14.—*And they talked together of all these things which had happened*, i.e. they were talking of the sufferings, the death, and the

burial of their Master, grieving that so great a prophet had suffered so unworthily, and sorrowing because they would see Him no more; for they evidently despaired of his resurrection and of the redemption of Israel.

Ver. 15.—*And it came to pass*, &c. Jesus teaches here that He is present with those who speak concerning Him. Let us then speak of Jesus, and He will be present with us also, and take part in our communings: not indeed now in bodily form, but spiritually, by the grace of His Holy Spirit, by which He inspires our hearts. For this much He Himself has promised, saying, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," S. Matt. xviii. 20. They therefore that speak of good have Jesus in their midst. They who speak of evil, Satan. Of this there can be no doubt.

Ver. 16.—*But their eyes were holden.* You will ask, How was this effected?

1. Dionysius the Carthusian replies, and S. Augustine (*lib.* xxii. chap. 9 *De Civit.*) favours his opinion, that they were struck with blindness like the men of Sodom, Gen. xix. 11. But this can hardly be true, for they saw Christ, and conversed with Him, although they knew Him not.

2. Cajetan thinks that their eyes were holden because their minds were so preoccupied, and taken up with the events which had come to pass. But the words of S. Mark xvi. 12, "He appeared in another form" are against this view.

3. S. Augustine (*Epist.* 59, *Quæst.* viii.) is of opinion that some change had come over the countenance of Christ, as at the transfiguration. But this does not accord with the dignity of his glorified body, which is changeless and everlasting. Later on, Augustine (*De Consens. Evang.* iii. chap. 25) changed his opinion and says that the eyes of the disciples were clouded over by Satan, or a darkness of some kind cast upon them, so that they might not recognise Christ. But, like as He appeared to the Magdalen in the form of a gardener, so he appeared to the two disciples in another form. The circumstances of His appearance were in accordance with His will and uninfluenced by the action of Satan.

I say, therefore, that they did not know the Lord, because although the body of Christ is unchanged, yet because it was glorified and united to the divine Word it possessed the power both of withdrawing itself from view, and also of affecting the sight of beholders either by appearing in a different form, by changing the medium as mirrors do, and even by a direct change of vision. For this is what S. Luke says, "their eyes were holden," by Jesus, just as if they had been covered by a veil so that they were unable to exercise their functions. Hence immediately that Jesus willed, they recognised Him.

It is much more easy to account for the fact that the disciples did not recognise the voice of Christ, for many without any difficulty so change the sound of their voices as to appear other than they are. S. Thomas, Suarez, and others.

There are several reasons why Christ appeared in another form to these disciples.

1. Because Christ and the angels when they appear to men make themselves like those to whom they appear. The two disciples were journeying: Christ therefore appeared to them as a wayfarer. They were in doubt concerning Him: therefore He made as if He were a stranger. So S. Augustine (*de Consens. Evang.* iii. 35) and S. Gregory (*hom.* 23 *in Evang.*) say, "The Lord did that outwardly in the eyes of the body which was done by themselves inwardly in the eyes of the mind. For they themselves inwardly both loved and doubted, but to them the Lord was present outwardly, although He did not reveal himself. To them, therefore, as they talked of Him He exhibited His presence, but as they doubted of Him He concealed the appearance which they knew. He indeed conversed with them, upbraided them with their hardness of heart, expounded the mysteries of holy Scripture which referred to Himself, yet because in their hearts He was a stranger to their faith, He made as though He would have gone further."

2. Lest, if He at once manifested himself to the disciples they might be overcome by the novelty and newness of His resurrection, and imagine that they saw not Christ but a phantom, and therefore might remain doubtful whether He had risen from the dead. But

now since He had conversed with them for some time, and then made Himself known, they could no longer doubt that He had risen from the dead.

3. "That the disciples might lay bare their sorrows and be cured of their doubt." Theophylact. For if He had at once said that He was Christ, they would not have dared to confess that they had been doubtful of the resurrection.

4. That from the circumstances of His appearance He might teach us that we are pilgrims and strangers, seeking an heavenly country, which we should be ever longing for, and strive our utmost to obtain. Wherefore S. Francis, who happened on a certain occasion to be spending his Easter in a monastery, where there were none of whom he could ask charity, mindful of our Lord's appearance to the two disciples in the form of a stranger on that very day, asked alms of the brothers themselves; and when he had received their alms, in a burst of sacred eloquence, he reminded them with all humility, that on their way through the desert of this world as strangers and pilgrims, like the true Israel they should in all lowliness of mind continue to celebrate the Passover of the Lord, *i.e.* their passage from this world to the Father; and he went on to inform them that it is the pilgrim's rule to seek shelter under the roof of others, to thirst for their own country; and peacefully journey thereunto. (Chronicle of the order of S. Francis).

Ver. 17.—*And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?* σκυθρωποί, "sulien" in the sense of downcast. Christ knew whence their sadness arose, but asks them the cause, in order that He might remove it: "As I followed I heard you speak of some one who was slain at Jerusalem; tell me therefore who he was, and how, and for what reason he was put to death."

Ver. 18.—*And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said*, &c. This Cleopas was the brother of S. Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin, the father of S. James the less, and S. Jude, and the grandfather of S. James the greater and S. John, who were the sons of Salome, the daughter of Cleopas. See chap. iii. 23.

Helecas, Bishop of Cæsarea, tells us on the authority of S. Jerome, that "Cleopas, or Alphæus, was the brother of S. Joseph, and one of the seventy disciples, and that he was slain by the Jews in the castle of Emmaus because of Christ." He was therefore a martyr. Hence, in the Roman Martyrology, the 25th of September is put down as the birthday of Blessed Cleopas, the disciple of Christ, who they say was slain by the Jews for confessing the faith in the very house in which he had entertained the Lord. See also Dorotheus (Lives of the Patriarchs).

Again, Cleopas, in the Greek Κλεόπας, is the same as "all glory," for the Jews who were subjugated by Alexander and the Greeks, took Greek names. But in the Hebrew the name may be taken to mean "adding to or increasing the Church," for קהלה, kehala, is an assembly or church, and פוש, pus, is to multiply. For Cleopas gave many sons and daughters to the Church of Christ.

Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem? Theophylact and Euthymius translate παροικεῖς ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ by "Art thou (only) a dweller in Jerusalem?" Others render it, "Art thou (only) a sojourner in Jerusalem?" The meaning is "Art thou such a stranger in Jerusalem, and so ignorant of what has been done in it to Jesus of Nazareth, as to ask who and what he was, about whom we are so sorrowfully conversing? All know the circumstances of His crucifixion and death, and can talk of nothing else. How is it that thou only art ignorant of these things?"

Ver. 19.—*And He said unto them, What things?* Christ constrains them to open their grief and to confess their doubts as to His resurrection.

And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth. They acknowledge Him, says Bede, to be a great prophet, but they do not speak of Him as the Son of God, either because their faith was imperfect, or because they feared lest they might fall into the hands of the persecuting Jews. For they knew not with whom they were speaking, and therefore concealed what they believed to be true. Because they say (verse 21) that they trusted that it had been he, as being the Messiah and the Son of God, which should have redeemed Israel.

Mighty in deed and in word. So should every Christian be, especially those who have devoted themselves to a religious life, or have been called to any office in the Church. What they preach they should perform, and teach first by example and then by word.

Ver. 20.—*And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him*, &c. They do not accuse the chief priests and the rulers, although they were persuaded of the injustice of their actions. For they feared lest this stranger might be a spy, seeking some cause of accusation against them.

Ver. 21.—*But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel* from the power of their enemies, *e.g.*, from the power of the Romans.

"We trusted that he had been the Messiah who would have restored the kingdom of Israel to the same, or even greater, dignity than it had possessed in the time of David and of Solomon. But now that he has been so unworthily put to death, although we do not despair, we have but little hope."

This was their grief, the wound which their faith had received, which Christ desired to hear from them, in order to heal.

"O disciples," says S. Augustine (*serm.* 140 *De Temp.*), "ye were hoping, therefore ye do not now hope. Behold Christ lives, but your hope within you is dead;" and again, "He was walking with them as their companion, and yet was their leader and guide."

And beside all this, to-day is the third day, &c. For Christ was crucified on the sixth day, and after three days rose from the dead. This is an aposiopesis, for the disciples, anxious and perplexed, knowing not what to think about Christ, as good as say, 'Jesus when He was alive said that He would rise from the dead on the third day; but although this is the third day we know not whether He has risen or is yet to rise." They were doubtful, balanced between hope and fear. "They speak thus," says Theophylact, "as men in doubt, and seem to me to be very undecided in their minds, for they are not absolutely unbelieving, nor do they believe aright. For their words 'we trusted that it had been he,' &c., indicate incredulity, but when they make mention of the third day, they

show themselves mindful of the words of Christ, 'on the third day I shall rise again;'" and again, "On the whole they spake as men in perplexity and doubt."

Ver. 22.—*Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished* (ἐξέστησαν). For what the women had told inspired them with awe rather than fear, and, says Theophylact, "overthrew their doubting and unbelief, whilst it strengthened their faith and hope in the resurrection of Christ. Their fear therefore struggled with their hope, and between the two they were undecided and in doubt."

Ver. 25.—*Then said He unto them, O fools.* Ἀνόητοι, rendered here in the Vulgate "stulti," but Gal. iii. 1., "insensati." With these keen words Christ as the Master rebukes the disciples for their ignorance and slowness to believe. For a teacher is allowed to stimulate his disciples by sharp reproof to the pursuit of higher or more accurate knowledge. See S. Matt. v. 22.

So our nature, frail and dull of understanding, needs some such stimulus to enable it to believe in spiritual things, and to keep itself steadfast in the hope of their realisation.

Ver. 26.—*Ought not Christ . . . to enter into His glory?* He calls His glorious resurrection and ascension, the sending of the Holy Spirit, His exaltation over every creature, the adoration of His name, the spread of the gospel throughout all the world, and His eternal kingdom, "glory."

"Ought not," ("futurum erat," the Arabic and Syriac). It behoved Christ through the Cross to enter glory:

1. Because the prophets had foretold it.

2. Because God the Father had decreed it from all eternity.

3. Because it was necessary that He should purchase our redemption by His death upon the Cross.

4. Because it was fitting that such glory should be obtained through the merit of such sufferings and labour.

5. Because it behoved Christ, as leader, to become an example to the martyrs, and to all those who strive through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The meaning is, "My death upon the Cross has shaken your faith and hope in My resurrection, therefore ye said 'we trusted' (sperabamus). But ye spake rashly and without cause. For this ought to have confirmed your faith, for there is none other way to the resurrection save through death, nor to glory save through suffering, and the reproach of the Cross."

Ver. 28.—*And He made as though He would have gone further.* This was no deceit: for He would have gone on if the disciples had not constrained Him, but as He knew that they would thus constrain Him to abide with them, in this respect he was not willing, but was making as if (προσεποιεῖτο) He would have gone further.

Hence S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.*) says, "When one feigning has reference to a certain meaning, it is not a falsehood, but a certain figure of the truth." And again, "A fiction founded on truth is a figure; not so founded, it is a lie." And S. Gregory (*hom.* 23 *in Evang.*) writes, "By the word 'fingere' we mean to put together or form, hence modellers of clay we call 'figuli.' He who was the truth did nothing by deceit. He manifested Himself to them in the body, such as He came before them in their midst. He would prove them whether they could show charity to Him as a stranger, although they might not yet love Him as God."

Ver. 29.—*And they constrained Him.* "From which example it is gathered," says S. Gregory, "that strangers are not only to be invited to hospitality, but even to be taken by force." And S. Augustine adds (*Serm.* 140 *De Temp.*), "Detain a guest, if you wish to recognise the Saviour; for hospitality restored what unbelief had taken away."

Saying, Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent, i.e. it is drawing near sunset. In order to detain Christ as their guest they exaggerate the lateness of the hour, for they returned soon after to Jerusalem, which was a three hours' journey.

Cardinal Hosius his whole life long had these words continually in his heart and on his lips, and died repeating often, "Abide with us, O Lord, for it is toward evening," and in truth the Lord abode with him, working many marvels by his means in Poland, in

Germany, and in Italy, which are related by his biographer Rescius, who ends by eulogising him as "the atlas of religion, the voice and other hand of Paul, the demolisher of Luther, the janitor of heaven, and the love and admiration of the world."

Ver. 30.—*He took bread and blessed it.* He blessed it by causing it to become His body as in the consecration of the Eucharist. For that Christ thus consecrated it, although Jansenius and some others deny it, is clear:

1. Because S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke use the same words concerning the institution of the Eucharist, as S. Luke uses here.

2. Because this blessing does not appear to have been given at the commencement of the meal, for Christ wished not to vanish out of their sight before He had eaten with them, lest they might think him a phantom. It was given in the midst, or rather at the end, of the meal. It was not therefore the ordinary blessing on what had been provided for their use, but solemn and eucharistic.

3. This is clear also from the effect which this blessing of the bread had upon the disciples: "their eyes were opened and they knew Him."

4. Furthermore, this is the opinion of the great majority of the Fathers. So the author quoted by S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 17) says, "The Lord not only blessed the bread, but gave it with His own hand to Cleopas and his companion. But that which is given by His hand is not only sanctified, but sanctification and a cause of sanctity to the recipient."

Again, "How did the Lord will to make Himself known? By the breaking of bread. We are content then; in the breaking of bread the Lord is made known unto us. In no other way is it His will to reveal Himself. Therefore, although we shall not see Him in bodily form, He has given us His flesh to eat." S. Augustine (*Serm.* 140 *De Temp.*).

This passage of Holy Scripture is a proof of the use of one species only in the Eucharist, for it is clear that Christ neither consecrated nor gave the cup to the disciples. After He had blessed the bread,

and given it to them, they knew Him, and immediately He vanished out of their sight. S. Augustine, Chrysostom, Bede and others.

Ver. 31.—*Their eyes were opened.* "See here the power and effect of the Eucharist. It opens the eyes of the mind to the knowledge of Jesus, and enables it to comprehend heavenly and divine mysteries. For the flesh of Christ possesses a great and illuminative power." Theophylact. Hence S. Augustine (*Serm.* 140 *De Temp.*) says, "Whosoever thou art that believest, the breaking of bread consoles thee, the absence of the Lord is no absence. Have faith, and He whom thou seest not is with thee."

Tropologically, he goes on to say, "By the exercise of hospitality we come to the knowledge of Christ." Again, "Let him who wishes to understand what he has heard, put in practice what he has understood." "Behold the Lord was not known whilst He was speaking, but when He gives them to eat, He allows Himself to be recognised." Gregory. Or according to the Gloss: "Truth is understood better in operation than by hearing; and none know Christ unless they are partakers of His Body, *i.e.* the Church, whose unity the Apostle commends in the sacrament of bread, saying, 'we being many are one bread, and one body.'" 1 Cor. x. 17.

And He vanished out of their sight. ἄφαντος ἐγένετο, *absconditus ab illis*, Arabic version. Christ was present with His disciples, but made Himself invisible to them: a power possessed, as theologians teach us, by His glorified body. So after His resurrection He was wont to appear to His disciples and vanish from their midst.

Calvin, rashly, denies this, and contrary to its meaning translates ἄφαντος by "He withdrew Himself." He denies this somewhat craftily, lest he might be compelled to acknowledge that Christ was present in the Eucharist, but hidden and invisible.

The causes why Christ vanished out of their sight directly He was recognised by the disciples are these:—

1. To show that He had risen from the dead, and had become glorified. For it is the property of a glorified body to appear or disappear at will. His sudden disappearance therefore was a new argument by which Christ proved the truth of His resurrection.

2. To teach that by the resurrection He had passed from this mortal life to a state of glory, and therefore no longer held familiar converse with men, but with God and the angels.

3. To teach us how we ought to reverence Christ, and those blessed ones who have entered into heaven. For we are bound to render to our glorified Lord the worship of *latria*, and to the blessed saints that of *dulia*.

4. That the disciples might return to the Apostles, who were sorrowing over the death of Christ, and comfort them by the tidings of His resurrection and appearing.

Ver. 32.—*And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us?* This was a new and certain proof that Christ was alive from the dead. For Christ taught not as Aristotle, Plato, and the philosophers, but so as to inflame the hearts of his hearers with divine love. Let then all teachers and interpreters of Holy Scripture imitate their Master, and seek not only to enlighten the understandings of those who attend upon their teaching, but to kindle the love of God in their hearts as well. Let them not be content with being as the Cherubim, but be also as the Seraphim. Let them be as S. Francis and his disciple S. Bonaventura, who became known as the "Seraphic Doctor."

So David wrote, "Thy word is very pure" (*ignitum*, Vulgate), Ps. cxix. 140; and Solomon: "Every word of God is pure," Prov. xxx. 5; and Moses: "From His right hand went a fiery law," Deut. xxxiii. 2.

So also Christ declared, "I am come to send fire on the earth." S. Luke xii. 49. Thus the Baptist "was a burning and a shining light," S. John v. 35; and Elias the prophet "stood up as fire, and his word burned like a lamp," Ecclus. xlviii. 1. Let us be, each one, an Ignatius, a burning and fiery disciple and preacher of Christ, so that the words of the prophet may be true of us, "Their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps." "They ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."

Ver. 33.—*And they rose up the same hour* (i.e., immediately and

without waiting to finish their meal) *and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together.* Actually there were but ten assembled, for Thomas was absent and Judas had hanged himself. But the Apostolic college is spoken of as "the eleven," even though some of the members may not happen to be present.

They "returned" (ὑπέστρεψαν) quickly, filled with an eager joy.

Them that were with them. The other disciples who were tarrying at Jerusalem with the Apostles.

Ver. 34.—*Saying, The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared unto Simon.* Christ appeared unto Peter before He showed Himself to the two disciples and the rest of the Apostles, because he was penitent, and because he was the prince of the Apostles. See verse 36.

Ver. 35.—*How He was known of them in breaking of bread.* S. Luke's expression for the Eucharist. So also S. Paul, 1 Cor. x. 16: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

Ver. 36.—*And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them.* In their midst, says Euthymius, that He might be seen of all, like as a shepherd stands in the midst of his scattered sheep to gather them again together around him. Ezek. xxxiv. 12.

"*Peace be unto you.*" This was the ordinary salutation of the Hebrews, who under the name of peace included prosperity, health, and every other blessing.

Very fittingly does Christ grant them His peace, to take the place of the fear and perturbation of mind which His death had caused them. For He is the peace of all His people, says S. Cyril. Because "doing away with every difficulty, He gathered together in one the merits of the Cross, which are peace, because all hindrances are taken away." S. Chrysostom on S. Matt. xxviii.

Ver. 37.—*But they . . . supposed that they had seen a spirit.* Because of Jesus' sudden appearance in their midst although the doors were shut.

Hence S. Ambrose says, "Although Peter believed in the resurrection, yet it was but natural that he should be terrified and affrighted when he saw that the Lord had the power of suddenly presenting

Himself in bodily form, in a place guarded by closed doors, and despite of obstructing walls."

Ver. 38.—*And He said unto them, . . . Why do thoughts arise in your hearts?* *i.e.* why do you give way to them and permit them to arise? "These thoughts," says Augustine (*serm.* 69 *De Diversis*) "were earthly. For had they been from heaven they would have descended, not ascended, into their hearts. Thus Christ showed that He knew the hearts of men, (καρδιογνώστης, Acts i. 24) and that He was God." Titus and Euthymius.

Ver. 39.—*Behold My hands and My feet,* &c. If you cannot believe your sight, believe your touch. Let your hands prove whether your eyes have played you false. S. Augustine. For the sense of touch is more to be relied upon than the sight.

Handle me (ψηλαφήσατέ), that by touching my body you may be assured of the reality of its existence. Hence it is clear, says S. Gregory, that a glorified body is immaterial (subtile) by reason of its spiritual powers, but material (palpabile) inasmuch as it is true to its nature.

You will ask, firstly, how the glorified body of Christ could be at one and the same time material and inmaterial?

I answer. First, because glorified bodies possess (1) the property of permeability, and hence are able not only to offer no resistance to another body, but even to penetrate it. And they possess (2) the power of eluding the touch, as they have the power of vanishing from the sight, according to what I have just said. These properties or powers they use or not, according as they are inclined.

Consequently, glorified bodies can be apprehended by the touch or not, according as they will.

You will ask, secondly, whether this handling of Christ, His sitting at meat with the disciples, and such like, are sufficient proofs of His resurrection?

I answer that these proofs were not absolutely and physically certain, for the angels, when they appeared in bodily form, were touched and handled by Abraham, Lot, and others; but they are certain in a moral sense, and as far as human certainty permits.

1. Because on this account, Christ willed to abide long with the Apostles, and to manifest Himself after His resurrection, as in His death, to their hearing, sight, and touch, senses which are held by men to be most trustworthy.

2. Because it pertained to the providence of God not to let these so great signs pass unnoticed, but to take away all pretence of deception. For the truth of the Messiah and the new religion was at stake, specially the point as to whether He really had risen from the dead.

3. Because these signs, taken in conjunction with the miracles of Christ, and the prophecies of His coming, made it both credible and certain, that He had indeed risen from the dead.

Ver. 40.—*And when He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet*—"pierced, and still bearing the prints of the nails," says Euthymius; as is clear from S. John xx. 27. For Christ willed that these five wounds, or rather wound-prints, should remain in His glorified body as trophies of His victory over sin and death and hell.

"He bore them with Him to heaven," says S. Ambrose, "in order to show them to God the Father, as the price of our liberty." For "He who destroyed the kingdom of death would not efface the signs of death." In like manner also the martyrs will exhibit their scars in heaven, as so many glorious tokens of their victory.

For they will be to them not a disfigurement but dignity, and in their bodies a certain beauty will shine forth, a beauty not of the body, but of merit; for such marks as these must not be accounted blemishes. S. Augustine (*De Civit. Lib.* xxii. *cap.* xx.)

You will ask whether the disciples actually handled and touched the pierced hands and feet of Christ after His resurrection?

I answer that this is a matter of uncertainty, because Scripture is silent on the subject. But it is probable that some both handled and touched the Lord, especially those who were the more doubtful concerning His resurrection, because they, on their part, were anxious to satisfy themselves, by actual touch, that it was no phantom, but Christ alive from the dead—because also Christ Himself bade

them "handle" Him, so that there might be no room for doubt, but that the Apostles might be able to preach to the Gentiles that Christ had indeed risen from the dead.

So we read, "That which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life . . . declare we unto you." 1 S. John 1. i.

Ver. 41.—*And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered.* On the one hand, because they had handled Him, the disciples believed that Jesus had risen, and taken again His true body; but on the other hand, so great was their joy and their wonder at the strangeness of the event, that they could scarcely believe that it was the very Jesus who had been so recently crucified. They rejoiced greatly because they believed, but the greatness of their joy reacted on their faith. So it is a matter of common experience that if a trustworthy person brings us some unexpected good news, our joy is so great that we refuse to credit it, lest if it prove untrue, and we findt hat we have been deceived, we sorrow as much as we before rejoiced. We restrain our joy until we are sure that it is well founded. So was it with the Apostles: "their exceeding great joy," says Vatablus, "obscured their judgment."

Have ye here any meat? Christ appeared to His disciples "as they sat at meat" (S. Mark, xvi. 13), and they, when they saw Him, out of reverence rose up from the table and ran to meet Him, full of joy and astonishment, and therefore doubtingly. Hence Jesus suffered them to handle Him, and since they did not even then fully believe, asked for meat, in order that He might eat before them, and so show that He was alive again.

Ver. 42.—*And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.* A proof of the frugality of the Apostles, for if they had had any better food they would have offered it to their Master. But as fishermen they fed on fish, just as Athæneus (*De Cœnis Sapientum*) tells us the frugal men of old were accustomed to do; and in point of fact up to the time of the deluge flesh was not known as an article of food. (See Gen. ix.)

Symbolically, says Bede, "the broiled fish signifies the sufferings of

Christ. For He, having condescended to lie in the waters of the human race, was willing to be taken by the hook of our death, and was as it were burnt up by anguish at the time of His passion. But the honeycomb was present to us at the resurrection; the honey in the wax being the divine nature in the human;" and again "He ate part of a broiled fish, signifying that having burnt by the fire of His own divinity our nature swimming in the sea of this life, and dried up the moisture which it had contracted from the waves, He made it divine food of sweet savour in the sight of God, which the honeycomb signifies. Or we may take the broiled fish to mean the active life drying up the moisture by the coals of labour, and the honeycomb is the sweet contemplation of the oracles of God." Theophylact. "By the command of the law the passover was eaten with bitter herbs, but after the resurrection the food is sweetened with a honeycomb." Gregory Nyssen.

Tropologically, says the Gloss: "Those who endure tribulation (*assantur tribulationibus*) for the sake of God, will hereafter be satisfied with true sweetness."

Another reason why Christ ate the broiled fish is given by an anonymous writer in the Greek *Catena:* "The word of God as a new and unapproachable fire, by the hypostatic union, dried up the moisture in which human nature as a fish—because of its incontinency—was immersed, and set it free by mixture of His passion, fulfilling so sweetly this dispensation as to make ready sweet food for Himself; for the salvation of men is the food of God."

Hence Christ soon after He had eaten, breathed on the Apostles, and bestowed on them the gift of the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins. S. John xx. 22.

Ver. 43.—*And He took it, and did eat before them.* Christ truly ate of the food, and not in appearance only, after the manner of an angel. "I did neither eat nor drink, but ye did see a vision." Tobit xii. 19. Yet He was not thereby nourished. So Theophylact says, "He ate by some divine power consuming what He was eating." Similarly, S. Augustine: "The thirsty earth, and the burning rays of

the sun absorb water, each in a different way; the one because of its need; the other by its power." So D. Thomas and the Schoolmen.

The Vulgate adds, "*sumens reliquias, dedit eis;*" but these words, although in the Arabic, are absent from the Greek and from the Syriac versions.

Ver. 44.—*And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you*, &c., i.e. that I was to suffer death upon the Cross and rise again the third day. Acknowledge Me then as the true Messiah, inasmuch as My words have been verified to the letter. Or by a metonomy these are the words, *i.e.* the things which I spake to you, My passion, death, and resurrection, which ye see accomplished. These things therefore ought not to appear to you strange and unexpected, for they were predicted, not only by me, but in time past by Moses, and the prophets, and by David in the Psalms concerning Me.

Some think that S. Luke wrote these words by anticipation, and that Christ spake them not on the day of His resurrection but on that of His ascension. For it was then that He bade the disciples remain in Jerusalem (Acts i. 4), as Luke records, verse 49, going on in the verses following to describe the ascension. But perhaps the words were used on both occasions, the oftener to impress them upon the Apostles for the greater confirmation of their faith.

Ver. 45.—*Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the scriptures.* He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself, as He had done before at Emmaus. See ver. 27.

Christ did this both to confirm the Apostles in their belief, and to prepare them to teach and to preach the faith. For it was part of the apostolic office to expound the Scriptures. Hence what He here began, Christ perfected at Pentecost, by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Hence it is clear:

1. That Holy Scripture is not, as heretics say, easy of interpretation to all.

2. That it is not to be interpreted, as they contend, according to the letter, but according to the teaching of that Holy Spirit, which

Christ bestowed upon His Apostles, which the Apostles delivered to the Church, and the Church has handed down to us. Hence S. Paul, 1 Cor. xii., tells us that God hath set teachers in the Church, and among the diversities of gifts numbers "the interpretation of tongues." And so in former times the Church had her interpreters, whose special duties are described by Baronius, vol. i. p. 394.

Ver. 46.—*And said unto them, Thus it is written* (Isa. liii., Ps. xxii. et alib.) *and thus it behoved Christ to suffer*, &c. See how by these articles of faith Christ opened the understanding of the Apostles, to the acknowledging the Scriptures, which foretold these events.

Ver. 47.—*And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name*, i.e.—1. By His authority. 2. At His command. 3. In His stead. That the Apostles should continue the teaching of Christ, and spread the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins throughout the world. 4. In His name, *i.e.*, in virtue of His meritorious death upon the cross, whereby alone God gives the spirit of repentance and remission of sin.

Beginning at Jerusalem. A command to the Apostles to commence their preaching at Jerusalem, and from thence to go unto all nations. "Beginning" (ἀρξάμενον, incipientibus, Vulgate). The Apostles were to begin their preaching at Jerusalem: 1. Because there the Synagogue was flourishing, and there the Church had its origin, for the old Jewish dispensation was transformed into the Christian Church by the preaching of Christ, according to the words of the prophet: "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Isaiah ii. 3. And again, "Arise, shine; for thy light has come." Ibid. lx. (Vulgate). 2. Because Christ, with all the blessings He came to bestow, was promised to the Jews by the prophets, and Jerusalem was their chief city; and 3. Because David and Solomon had reigned there, and Christ, the son of David, had come to restore their kingdom, but in a higher and a spiritual sense (see Acts i. 4).

Ver. 48.—*And ye are witnesses of these things.* (See commentary on Acts i.)

Ver. 49.—*And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you,*

i.e. after a few days, when the Feast of Pentecost is come, I will send you the Holy Spirit, who will teach you clearly many things beside these, and enable you to preach the gospel to all nations.

But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high. δυνάμιν, *i.e.*, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for "as a general does not permit his soldiers who are about to meet a large number, to go out until they are armed, so also the Lord did not permit His disciples to go forth to the conflict before the descent of the Spirit." S. Chrysostom in *Catena.*

Tropologically, S. Gregory (*Past.* iii. 26) says, "We abide in a city when we keep ourselves close within the gates of our minds, lest by speaking we wander beyond them; that when we are perfectly endued with divine power we may then as it were go out beyond ourselves to instruct others."

Ver. 50.—*And He led them out as far as to Bethany*, and from thence to the mount of Olives. Bethany was about fifteen furlongs [stadia] from Jerusalem, and close by the mount of Olives. Christ went to Bethany to say farewell to Lazarus and his sister, and to bring them with Him to mount Olivet, in order that they might witness His ascension, and share in His triumph.

And He lifted up His hands towards heaven, as if seeking a special blessing for His disciples.

And blessed them, signing them with the sign of the Cross, as Dionysius the Carthusian and others think. Indeed, S. Jerome, commenting on the words, "I will set a sign among them," Isa. lxvi. 19, says, Our ascending Lord left us this sign, or rather placed it on our foreheads, so that we may freely say, "The light of Thy countenance is lifted up upon us, O Lord." For the Cross is the sign of Christ, which is the fountain of all benediction and grace. Hence the tradition which has come down from the time of Christ and the Apostles that in giving a blessing the hands should always form the sign of the Cross.

Therefore, says Theophylact, we should learn when about to leave our dependents or friends, to give them our blessing, and, signing them with the sign of the Cross, commit them to the keeping of God.

Ver. 52.—*And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* They rejoiced greatly because they had seen their Master triumphantly ascend into heaven, because they eagerly and without doubting looked for the promised gift of the Comforter, and because they had good hope that Christ would, in like manner, after they had laboured in the gospel cause, receive them to Himself, according to His gracious promise. S. John.

Ver. 53.—*And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.* "Continually." We may either take this word to refer to the time of the descent of the Holy Spirit, for before His coming they remained at home for fear of the Jews, or we may take it absolutely, for the upper room in which they dwelt was near the temple, so that they could easily go to and fro. Acts i. 13.

In midst of prayers and praises, with eager preparation of heart, they waited for the promise of the Spirit, says Bede, who also observes "that S. Luke, who commenced his Gospel with the ministry of Zacharias, the priest in the temple, very fitly concludes it with the devotion of the Apostles in the same holy place. For he has placed them there, about to be the ministers of a new priesthood, not in the blood of sacrifices, but in the praises of God, and in blessing."

Morally, the Apostles and the disciples teach us by their example to make the Christian life a perpetual round of praise to God and Christ. For thus we enter upon the life of the blessed, to whom the ceaseless praise of God is, as I have often shown, for everlasting their labour and their rest. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be alway praising Thee."

END OF VOL. VI.

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